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Wednesday, 14 June 2006



A HERO.



THE MAN AT THE WHEEL.

A HERO

PHILIP'S BOOK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"OLIVE," "THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY," "COLA MONTI," &c.

With Illustrations by James Godwin.



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INTRODUCTION.



“A HERO, my nephews?” echoed Uncle Philip, stealing in upon a conclave that was being held to decide the merits of a “fellow,” who was universally considered the head of the school—in fighting at least. “Pray, my good lads, what do you mean by ‘a Hero?’ ”

His nephews were silent. Probably they thought Captain Philip Carew was the person best fitted to answer his own question. For though not yet forty years of age, he had been bronzed in the Tropics, frozen in the Arctic Seas, had led forlorn-hopes in China, and commanded Pacific expeditions to the South Seas,

and finally had returned, invalided by a shot on the field of Moulton in India. He had gone through many tribulations of divers kinds, yet he was still a handsome looking fellow, with more brains and more heart than nine-tenths of mankind, even though he was a soldier.

He repeated his question, "Pray, what is a Hero?"

Still no answer.

"Get the dictionary!" said Uncle Philip. He looked out the word. "*Hero, a great man!* Short and terse, truly. Now boys, define that: 'A Hero, viz., A Great Man.'"

A few tried to do it; but nobody gave a clear reply.

"You are all puzzled? No wonder. That same definition has puzzled the world ever since it was a world. I myself racked my poor brains on the subject for three whole months. But I think I solved the question at last.

"How, uncle?" some one ventured to ask.

"Oh, it would be a long story. It happened many years ago, when I was a boy."

It was a magic beginning, "When I was a boy." Young people do so delight in a bit of

autobiography. There was a general entreaty for that portion of Uncle Philip's history which taught him the true definition of a Hero.

He hesitated a little, for many reasons; but then he was such an unselfish kind-hearted soul, the very perfection of a bachelor uncle.

Soon, he hit upon a plan.

"Boys, there are twelve days between now and the New Year; and every day we have an idle hour or two between the lights, or just before bedtime. Now, in that hour I'll tell you, if you like, my adventures in search of a Hero. If by New Year's Eve, I have not found him, nor you either, why—" here a sudden and rather mysterious smile danced in Uncle Philip's brown eyes—"we must look for him in some other way."

The tale thus told, or rather the sketch of boyish life, too simple to be called a tale, has been preserved by the present Author.

She has done so, for the amusement of all

boys, a race whom she heartily loves, from the petticoated urchin to the big hobbledehoy. But especially this book is written for another Philip,—

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON,

now a little year-old child, but who, his god-mother hopes and prays, may one day mingle with the world of men, and there prove himself—in the noblest sense of the word—a Hero!

A HERO.



CHAPTER I.

"I HEAR they are all very nice children, your Scotch cousins, and one of them in particular is quite a little hero."

These were a few of the many parting words my mother said to me, when I, a lad of twelve years old, was trusted to pay my first visit from home. It was to my uncle, my father's half brother, who lived in the north, and whom neither I nor my English mother had ever seen.

A little Hero! I remember the word stuck fast to my memory—for I had been deeply studying Plutarch's Lives, until my mind was full of Epaminondas, Alcibiades, Aristides the Just, and "all those sort of chaps," as you school boys would

have said. Also—with my Scottish visit in prospect—I had read up tolerably in the history of Wallace and Bruce, though I still thought the Greek warriors much the finer fellows. With some dim notion that my cousin might be one who wore a kilt and wielded a broadsword, and was ready to fight everybody in the fashion of Sir Walter Scott's Roderick Dhu, I asked my mother which of the boys he was, and what did she mean by calling him a "hero."

She perhaps thought she had said too much, so gave me unsatisfactory answers. But I persisted.

"What sort of a hero is he? Does he fight with a shield and a spear, like the Thebans; or in armour, like William Wallace? or with guns and pistols, like"—

Here I glanced up to where, over the mantelpiece of our little cottage parlour, hung my father's rifle, sword, and belt. Suddenly I remembered a letter my mother once shewed me, in which it said that "Lieutenant Henry Carew died the death of a hero."

I stopped—for my mother's eyes following the direction of mine, had fallen on the sword and belt. She never looked at them without crying. So I did not like to put any more questions about heroes.

Nevertheless I thought a great deal of my cousin, and speculated very much, and not without con-

siderable fear, as to what sort of a person he would turn out to be. This curiosity was so strong that it actually helped to make me less sorrowful at parting with my mother and sisters, — don't laugh, boys, for I was rather tender hearted then, and much petted, being the youngest, and the only son. But I'm not ashamed of it—no, upon my word I'm not. It is only a coward who is ashamed of being fond of his mother and sisters.

Well—I said good-bye to them all at home. I remember pretending to have a bad cold as a sort of apology for taking out my pocket-handkerchief—a very foolish cheat on my part; but I did not like to be thought a baby. It was only when we had long left our quiet village, rattled over London streets, and my poor mother and I sat on the deck of the ferocious-looking steamer that was to carry me away far north—where neither she nor I had ever been before—it was only then, I say, when she, half crying herself, kept telling me to “cheer up,” and “be a man”—that I proved myself to be still a mere baby, by bursting out blubbering on her shoulder.

(“I'm not ashamed of it now, not in the least,” said Uncle Philip, speaking very thick and blusteringly, but growing rather red about the eyes—“She was a good woman always—your grandmother—God bless

her! and, as they say in the East, may she live a thousand years!"

Which sentiment being universally echoed, Uncle Philip went on.)

I don't remember much about the voyage, except the preliminary incident of my mother's wanting to put me in the ladies' cabin, under the care of the stewardess, and of my indignant protestation against the same. It seemed a positive insult to a boy of my mature age—thirteen; though my poor mother would persist in considering me a baby, and unable to take care of myself. The matter ended in my being assigned, with the dignity due to my sex, to the gentlemen's half of the vessel, where I was tossed about and scolded incessantly during three interminable days, during which I lay in all the helpless misery of a first sea voyage, heartily wishing I could be quietly dropped overboard, and so come to an end at once, without anybody's being the wiser.

At length somehow or other I began to feel better, and took courage to crawl up the companion-ladder, in order to find out whereabouts in the wide world I was; for I had an uncomfortable fear that the boat must have tumbled through an entire ocean since I last went on deck, and that we should find ourselves somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic. An idea not very pleasant to a small individual, who however

he might admire heroes in theory, was by nature a rather timid boy.

("Oh, Uncle Philip," broke in one or two astonished voices. But Uncle Philip repeated that it was quite true. He seemed to take pride in the fact, as if to show how much force of will could effect in the formation of character.)

It was late one evening, when I crept on deck, and crouched down in a woful half-frightened condition behind the man at the wheel. I could see nothing but him, for the night was very misty. The boat appeared to be going through a dense white fog, dashing on nobody knew where. We might be off the shore of America for all I could tell—it seemed such an awful length of time that we had been at sea. I was very cold too, though it was summer time,—so I began to think that we must have come within the line of the floating ice-bergs, which, as I had somewhere read, are often met with in the Atlantic on the voyage to North America. My geographical notions—indeed all my ideas, were rather confused; but then it must be remembered that I was at best a queer-like old fashioned little fellow, brought up at home, entirely among women, with no brothers or school-fellows. Moreover I had been sea-sick for four days, which does not materially improve one's faculties.

I could not get the notion of ice-bergs out of my head, and as the mist cleared a little, I looked anxiously over the ship's side. Lo! there was a confirmation of all my fears! A great, grey, mist-enveloped thing, rising right out of the water—seeming to be floating down upon us, or we upon it; for my still dizzy head could not distinguish which. I looked in terror on the man at the wheel, but he appeared quite comfortable, standing there, the light from the compass lamp just shewing his hard, ugly, weatherbeaten face, and his big shoulders, all the bigger for an enormous pea-coat. That man was my nightmare, afterwards, for many a year; whenever I ate overmuch supper (as boys will do, more shame to them), I always dreamt I was turned into a steam-boat, and he sitting on my deck, *i. e.* my lungs—was steering me right against an eternal succession of ice-bergs.

I looked at this man, then at the misty object standing upright in the sea, then down the solitary deck of the vessel, and lastly at the man again. I got positively frightened, everything was so silent and strange. At length I plucked up spirit to go nearer him, and say, in a small voice—"If you please"—

But the man at the wheel might have been cut out of rock. He took no notice. Most likely, he neither heard nor saw me, so engrossed was he in his

duty, honest fellow ! It never struck me, as he stood there, his eyes keenly fixed forward, doing nothing but turn his wheel a little way round and back again, that with every slight motion of the hand he was guiding this large vessel's course.

Curiosity, or dogged perseverance, or obstinacy,—I had all three—impelled me not to give in, but to address my man again, for I was beginning to think him something supernatural ; especially as, in my universal search after knowledge, I had read a queer sort of poem, which I greatly admired, but did not altogether understand—the “Ancient Mariner.” So I just took courage to touch the sleeve of the pea-coat, and finding that it was quite real, as well as the arm within it, I gave both a good pull.

“Hollo !” shouted the sailor, rather startled, until he perceived my small self. He merely shook me off, as if I had been a puppy dog pawing him, and turned to the wheel again.

Now, as I said, I *am* rather obstinate by nature ; and moreover my dignity was hurt. I pulled his arm again, addressing him boldly, as—“You, sailor !”

“Ahoy !”

“Where are we, sailor, if you please ?” I asked meekly. “And what is that great thing there ?”

“Yon's Ailsa Craig, and ye're aff the coast o' Scotland.”

This information, given in a very grumpy voice, was all I could get out of him. I thought him a most unpleasant surly fellow, little knowing that on his strict minding of his duty depended all our lives. Afterwards, as I grew older and wiser, this little adventure taught me that it is best not to "bother" unnecessarily those who have our guidance in their hands. I found this plan to tell through life, especially with regard to those who, speaking metaphorically, have the steering of the family ship. So, boys, whenever you are disposed to plague your father about trifles, or make complaints to your tutor, or anything of that sort, just remember one little maxim that you may find written up in all steam-boats—"Don't speak to the man at the wheel."


I went down below, and slept—my first real sleep since I left home. It could not have lasted long, however, when I was awakened by a great trampling overhead, and by the engines letting off steam. The steward, putting his head in, bawled something about "Greenock," which, as I suddenly remembered, my mother had strongly impressed on me as being the place where my uncle was to meet me. In a great fright, I huddled on my jacket, collected my properties together as well as I could, and went on deck.

("It is a curious thing," added Uncle Philip in a

parenthesis,—“how well I remember every little circumstance of this journey, the first important epoch of my life. All seems as clear as yesterday,—and clearer as I go on. I must certainly have a capital memory. But so much the better for you, my young audience.”)

Now, as I said before, I had never seen my uncle, nor indeed, from some family differences, had I ever heard much about him, except his name, which being rather un-English, I had in the bewilderment of the moment quite forgotten. No unlucky boy could feel more thoroughly desolate than I did on that momentous day, when, at four in the morning, I found myself on the steamer's deck off Greenock quay, jostled hither and thither amidst the confusion of hurried passengers and shouting porters; feeling queer and half asleep, for it was not yet broad daylight; and bewildered by the clatter of strange tongues, some Scotch, some Gaelic, though both were alike unintelligible to me. I do not think that at any after portion of my life did I ever feel more dolefully miserable. I sat down on a coil of ropes, with my little trunk beside me, and in truth was very near crying, had I not remembered that *that* would disgrace a boy of thirteen years old.

Soon I heard, through the din of cross passengers' voices, one—not cross certainly, though it had a pe-



culiar tone—very Scotch I thought. Nevertheless, nothing ever impressed my childish mind more than the first tone of that voice—strong, deep, steady, and kind, giving one at once a feeling of respect, slight fear, and instinctive trust. It sounded distinctly through all the confusion of the vessel, as its owner walked down the deck, looking round him.

“Is there any boy here named Philip Carew?”

I jumped up, with a sudden instinct of joy, jumped almost into the arms of my Scottish uncle.

He gave me a quick hearty welcome—there was no time for more: caught up my luggage with one hand and myself with the other, and in a minute we were standing on the quay.

Then it was I managed to steal an enquiring look at my uncle. He was a tall big man—with rather harsh features, tanned as brown as a berry; and a quantity of grey hair flying about in all directions, in a fashion that irresistibly reminded me of a haystack in a high wind. At first sight he seemed a very formidable person—especially to a shy English boy—but as soon as he began to speak there was something in his smile so very good-natured, warm-hearted, and cheery, that I took courage.

“Lift up your head, boy: let me look at you!”

He did so for a long time, and then turned his head away. I afterwards guessed why. He and

his half-brother had been boys together, but, when young men, had suddenly parted in anger, and never met more. I was considered very like my father, and perhaps he noticed it.

“Norman!” shouted my uncle abruptly, as we stood on the now deserted quays; a boy of about my own size came forward, I did not notice from whence. “Here, lads, shake hands. Philip Carew, this is your eldest cousin, Norman MacIlroy. (That then was the queer name I had forgotten.) Be friends with one another, as your fathers were before you,—and mind, never quarrel, never quarrel!”

Saying this, he walked off hastily to another end of the quay, leaving us two boys together. I eyed my cousin very curiously. To this day I remember the look of him.

A slender tight-made little fellow, anything but a beauty—(now I myself was “a very pretty boy” I believe). He had a thorough Scotch face—high cheek-bones—a freckled skin—and hair which, in many an English school, would have assuredly gained for him the pleasant nick-name of “Carrots.” Not that it was really carrotty, being a rather pretty colour, I thought, but nevertheless decidedly red. He was dressed in a jacket and trowsers, (which I should certainly have scorned as being apparently made out of my mother’s black and white plaid

shawl), and he had on a queer sort of cap without a brim—a “Glengarry” bonnet, as I afterward found out.

We stood and eyed one another rather suspiciously—Scotch boy and English boy—just as if we had been the two opposing armies on Flodden Field, of which I had lately read. At last, the idea seemed to strike us that it was very funny, our staring at one another in this stupid way; for, with one impulse, we both burst out laughing.

“That’s right, old fellow,” said my cousin, patting me on the shoulder.—“We shall be capital friends directly.”

We made no more fraternization than this, for boys are very shy of any outward expression of liking; but somehow we got into friendly talk. When Uncle MacIlroy came back, he found us sitting together on the steps of the custom-house, quite sociable; Norman having learned from me the whole history of my voyage, while he, in return, was communicating various pieces of information as to where I now was, and whether I was going.

I observed that he had, like his father, an odd sing-song way of speaking, which I could not at first catch, and which sometimes made me laugh. I concluded it was only the Scotch accent, and exulted in the vast superiority of my own cockney tongue.

"Well, lads, how are you getting on?" said my uncle, taking out his watch—"Tis now just five, and the first Dunoon boat does not start till seven—What will you do? Would you like something to eat, Philip, or wait till you join your aunt's breakfast table at eight?"

Being in a state of excitement and bewilderment that entirely took away my appetite, I said I would wait—though where I was to be taken to eat this problematical breakfast I had not the least idea.

"Come then, here's enough to keep you from famishing for an hour or two."

He pulled out of his pocket a three-cornered thing which he called a *scone*; a queer looking cake I thought, but really very nice. I ate one, and Norman another, with considerable gusto; then we walked up and down the quay, looking at the shipping close by, the broad river, and the hills beyond.

I don't think, nephews, that I ever shall forget that morning. It was the first morning I had seen the sun rise, being, like most other spoiled children, a very lazy little fellow, and a disgraceful lie-a-bed. Until now I had no notion how the world looked at four or five in the morning, especially in Scotland. That picture still remains, so firmly rivetted was it on my childish memory—the silent, solitary quay—the ships lying motionless alongside,

as if they were half asleep—the broad bars of amber and rosy clouds streaking the east—the distant hills painted of a deep lilac—and the river between, taking all sorts of colours according as the sky changed. I never saw such a scene as that—never! It made me an early riser for the rest of my life.

Norman tried hard to amuse me, and put my geographical powers to their utmost stretch, by pointing out, with a very natural pride, the beauties of his country.

Ben Lomond was over there,—he said; I had surely heard of the great Ben. Perhaps I might see him now, unless, as was probable, he had his night-cap on.

“His nightcap!” I repeated, rather puzzled.

“I mean the mist that is almost always seen covering the top of very high mountains,” explained my cousin.

Upon which there luckily flashed across my mind a sentence out of my geography book—“*Highest mountains in Scotland are Ben Lomond and Ben Nevis.*” So I merely observed—“Oh, of course!” and hid my ignorance beneath a very wise shake of the head.

“There’s Dumbarton Rock, so celebrated in history,” continued Norman, but talking in a very quiet way, not in a show-off style at all. “You may see

it clearly, far down the reach of the river, towards Glasgow. It's a curious place; I once climbed to the top of it, to Wallace's watch-tower."

"Oh, William Wallace," said I, anxious to exhibit my acquaintance with Scottish history. "I know all about him. He was a great hero, don't you think so?"

"Yes," said Norman, rather indifferently, for he was watching his father, who happened to be looking grave just then.

The word hero set me off on my old hobby, and reminded me of my mother's still unexplained words, concerning the one of my cousins who was "quite a hero." It could not be Norman. Such a quiet-looking, plain little fellow, in a plaid jacket and trowsers! not at all the sort of hero I had expected. Perhaps there might be another of the family.

"How many brothers have you?" said I abruptly.

"There are five of us—I am the eldest."

"You!" I exclaimed with some surprise and a little disdain, for my hopes of finding the "hero" became less and less. "All younger than you. What babies!"

"Not quite," said Norman laughing. "I'm not over tall myself, though I'm older than I seem; but if you like a great big fellow, there's my next brother, Hector."

Ah, that was it! Hector must be the hero—called after his great namesake, the defender of Troy. I was thoroughly “up” in that history, having been lately put into Virgil (for I was rather a clever boy), and having got safely through the second book of the *Æneid*. Here was the secret out; Hector was certainly the hero my mother meant. I prepared myself with no little expectation and with some alarm, for the expected meeting.

So full was my mind of this, that I don’t clearly recollect anything more that happened, until the steamboat landed at a pier, very quiet and desolate compared with the London quays; and I, quite out of breath with climbing a terribly hilly street which Norman called “a brae,” found myself at my uncle’s door.

In the little parlour, at the head of the breakfast table, sat my aunt. I did not notice her much then, except that she looked kind, and kissed me. But I was dying with curiosity to see my hero-cousin. There were in the room three small boys, the youngest quite a baby. I was quite relieved to hear my uncle call out “Where’s Hector.”

“In his bed—Hector’s always lazy,” said some of the younger lads.

“Hector rowed us half-way to Greenock and back last night,” observed Norman in his quiet way.

"So he did," cried my uncle, smoothing a rather angry brow. "But surely he has had rest enough. Go, Philip, help to pull your cousin out of bed ; we can have no lazy loons here."

Alas, for my expected hero!

Hector was a great boy, much bigger than Norman. He looked very handsome too, though he lay fast asleep with his mouth open ; which was not becoming, nor, indeed, at all like a hero. Nevertheless, when we had fairly roused him—a difficult matter—and he was up and dressed, I regarded my cousin with much respect. He was a very fine fellow, tall and strong, with sunburnt cheeks and curly brown hair, and oh ! such a loud, merry, hearty voice. I greatly admired him, and thought that I must be right at last in my hero, even though he had neither kilt, pistols, nor broadsword, but came down to breakfast in the ugly plaid jacket and trowsers, like his brothers.

The rest of my cousins I remember I scarcely looked at, but set them all down together as "the children." There was among them but one little girl.

(Here Uncle Philip paused, but continued after a few moments—"Some of you elder ones may remember 'Cousin Gracie,' as you called her, who spent some months with grandmamma, and died ten years ago, before I went to India."

The children looked grave, for most of them had heard something about a Scottish lady who was to have been Uncle Philip's wife, and for whose sake it was thought he would always remain an old bachelor. After a brief silence, the story was continued.)

Norman came in, carrying his sister in his arms, for she was lame in her ankles just then, and could not walk. Gracie had always been delicate, they said; but she smiled sweetly, and thanked Norman so cheerfully when he set her down, that no one would have thought she was ill. She was one of those patient creatures who make sickness so beautiful, that afterwards we remember them as if they had been angels.

(Uncle Philip's voice altered; and after a sentence or two more, in which he tried to continue the story by a description of his first breakfast in Scotland, he came to a dead stop, observed that it was bedtime, and finished the history for that evening.)

CHAPTER II.

OF course, children (said Uncle Philip), you don't expect me to go on telling you categorically what I and my cousins did every morning, noon, and night. That were impossible to the best memory in the world, while still a childish memory. When we think of our young days we can but remember circumstances here and there; particular days, hours, or events, which stand out clear from the rest, like bits of a distant landscape viewed through a telescope, which appear wonderfully distinct and accurate so far as they extend, but which only comprise a small portion of the view.

Thus, I shall tell you at hap-hazard fragments of autobiography—certain days or certain adventures;—the rest of our life at Dunoon you must imagine for yourselves.

The first thing I remember was that same evening, after I had been sent to bed by my sensible aunt, and had slept throughout the day as sound as

a top. I woke up to tea, and then stood looking out of the window on the beautiful river. Now I had never seen any river or large sheet of water, except that day when I sailed down the Thames and over the sea. O miserable voyage! enough to give me, in a moral sense, a perpetual hydrophobia. ("You understand boys, I don't mean mere dog-madness. Look to your Greek derivations—*hydro-phobia*," said Uncle Philip parenthetically).

I had thought and said to Norman that the very sight of water would be enough to make me ill, henceforth; but I changed my mind when I looked on the magnificent Clyde.

"That's the Clough point opposite," said Norman, goodnaturedly telling me the various places down the shore. "Farther down are two islands, the Greater and Lesser Cumbraes, we call them. About there the Firth divides and goes round either side of the Island of Bute. A long way beyond, you may see something like a two headed cloud lying on the horizon."

I did, with some difficulty, for my eyes were not accustomed to such distances.

"That's Goatfell, the topmost peak of the Island of Arran. A curious island it is, all formed of hills, or rather granite rocks. It's awful fatiguing work to climb Goatfell, but my father says we lads shall

try to do it some day. Did you ever climb a mountain, Philip?"

I confessed, somewhat with shame, that until to-day I had never even seen one. And I further confessed, that in the sight I had been a good deal disappointed. "A mountain isn't half what I thought," said I, "I expected they would be a great deal higher, and would rise right upright like the side of a house, very awful and grand. Now those hills there are nothing; I could run up them easily."

"Could you, my boy?" said Uncle MacIlroy, coming behind us. "But that is what we all do on entering the world; we imagine to ourselves mountains, and find them mere molehills,—we try to climb molehills and find they are very considerable mountains after all. Hout, tout! (a queer expression he had) bide your time till ye are wiser, Philip Carew."

I did not then understand my uncle's quaint saying, but I have since.

We were interrupted by Hector's shouting from the garden below, "Norman! Cousin Phil! will you come and have a pull?"

"What does he mean?" said I, "what sort of a pull?"

"A pull at the oar," answered Norman, laughing. "Did you never row?"

I certainly never did, in fact I had never been in any boat but a canal-boat drawn by a horse. I tried to explain this, my sole experiment in navigation, as I was going down to the beach with the boys; but Hector burst into such fits of laughter that I found the story too humiliating. In fact when I saw these two sturdy, active, fearless Scottish lads haul up their boat, drag me into it, and dash off amidst threatening rocks, and waves so high that the little boat went up and down on them like a cockle-shell, making me inclined to scream with fright,—I began to feel that as regarded all manly exercises my education had been very much neglected.

I had seemed to myself a very fine fellow strutting about among my mother and sisters at home; I shrunk into a mere baby, sitting in the stern, with those two lads, little older than myself, so brave and independent, sweeping among the waves and under the shadow of the hills, which, I began to think were really grand after all.

"It's growing misty over the river," said Norman, stopping in his laughter and jokes with his brother, which, I must say, they tried to make intelligible and amusing to me, but hardly succeeded; I still felt so strange to all about me.

"Never mind mist, it will be moon-rise directly," Hector cried, giving a long, sinewy stroke with his

oar, and then laughing to see that with his greater strength he could pull his brother round,—that is, he could make the boat turn till her bow was where her stern should be. She spun round and round till I was quite frightened.

“Hector, you’re too daring,” said Norman.

“And you’re too—” Perhaps in the excitement of the moment he was going to say “too cowardly” but he stopped.

“Hector,” said Norman again, in a very low tone. I was a good deal surprised to see that Hector gave up his too venturesome fun and rowed steadily for full ten minutes. But when I had got over my fright, I am not sure that I did not admire the daring reckless younger brother a great deal the most, and became quite convinced in my own mind that he, and none but he, was the Hero.

We pulled on merrily, at least they did; while I sat watching them in longing admiration; for nothing impresses a boy with so much respect as the exercise of physical power. I remember I carried my enthusiasm on this point to such an extent, that afterwards I actually revered the first fellow who ever gave me a sound thrashing, more than I did any other boy in the school.

“Phil! would you like to take an oar?” shouted Hector, more in bravado than kindness, I fancy.

Now I, having got somewhat accustomed to my novel position, was longing for an opportunity of doing that which the two lads seemed to do with so much ease. Nevertheless my boldness and self-confidence were not over great, and I was half deterred by Hector's unpleasant manner of making the offer.

"I should like very much to row," said I hesitating, "but—"

"But, you're afraid! Well, I dare say you're right, my little fellow," answered my cousin, in the rather contemptuous and superior tone which big boys delight in using towards smaller ones. I was a good deal nettled, but had sense enough to hold my tongue. Hector went on laughing and talking, quite indifferent to, or oblivious of me. I thought this scarcely polite; but he was such a good-natured hearty fellow that nobody could be angry with him long.

We got into smooth water in the curve of the bay.


"Now," said Norman, calling to me from the bow,—he always gave his brother the stroke-oar, which dignity Hector would not easily have relinquished, I suspect;—"Now, Phil, come over here and I'll give you your first lessons in pulling; we must make you as good an oarsman as any of us, before you go south again.—Hola, there! take care!"

His cheery voice and good-natured way of helping me, as I "crawled" down the length of the boat, in the midst of Hector's suppressed grumbling, made me feel wondrously grateful to my cousin Norman.

I clutched the oar eagerly, and of course did what everybody does the first time of attempting such a feat, easy though it is afterwards, when one gets into the knack of it. I made an awkward dolt of myself; got red in the face, struck myself breathless by a blow on the chest with the oar, "caught crabs" innumerable, and all that sort of thing! The boys burst into shouts of laughter; even Norman could not help doing so, until he saw tears of vexation in my eyes—for I was a very touchy little fellow, and very self-conceited too.

"Come, never mind; you've plenty of pluck, I see; you'd row capitally in time," said he, "only do not splutter and dash the water about, and make such an awful fuss and exertion over it. Take things coolly, my lad. Look here."

He took the oar from my hand, and showed me how in this, as in many other things throughout life, quiet work makes quick work; for a simple and adroit turn of the wrist effected all that was necessary. He pulled a few strokes, which seemed to me wonderfully clever; doing so readily what I had done with such desperate effort. Now



I understood the mystery; it was quite a treat to watch him, dipping his oar noiselessly and quietly without producing one ripple in the water, and bending forward his body with ease and grace at every stroke. My admiration rose immediately, and with it my desire of emulation.

"Let me try again," I entreated. Hector looked rather cross, and said something about "keeping back the boat," and "spoiling fun;" but the elder brother took no notice, and I had my will.

I have known many a pleasurable excitement in my life; many a thrill of triumphant pride; but I do not think I ever felt *so* proud, as in the moment when, my awkwardness overcome, I first found myself really "rowing;"—sweeping the boat along with the force of my own single strength. It was a sense of victory, of power, of independence—feelings, the most delicious to either man or boy; Alexander the Great (always my pet hero), when he had conquered his millions, could not have felt prouder than I, when I conquered the waves of Clyde, and looked over the whole river, conscious that with a little boat and an oar, I could at any time be free master of it all.

("I have owed my cousin Norman a great many things in my life," continued Uncle Philip, smiling, "but one of the greatest debts I owe him, was teaching me to row. From that night I date a

pleasure, which I shall never cease to delight in while I live. Children, I don't think Uncle Philip is ever so thoroughly happy as when he is pulling away over a broad river, the boat dancing on like a feather, with the waves lapping at the keel—nothing but water around, and the blue sky overhead—Ugh!”

Captain Carew here gave an unearthly grunt, probably expressive of intense satisfaction, and after a minute's pause went on.)

Henceforth, I took such a liking to the water, that Uncle MacIlroy declared I must certainly have been born amphibious. My first letter home contained such glowing accounts of my daring aquatic exploits, that I am sure my poor mother must have been terrified out of her senses, and never expected to see her only son return alive. But this was before the time of penny postage, so I had no opportunity of frightening her often.

We began to lead a very happy life—my cousins and I; it was a life of entire holiday, for my uncle lived in Glasgow. He was one of the masters in the High School there, and a very learned man too, having been educated for a minister. The family had only come to spend a few weeks at the coast before the classes recommenced.

Uncle MacIlroy was one of those wise people who

think that work should be work, and play, play; so he gave his boys full liberty, and even made himself quite a boy likewise among them all. This however was only at times; and amidst all the freedom he used, and allowed them to use, one could see that it was merely the pleasant condescension of a supreme ruler—so certain of his authority that he could afford to let the reins loose at times. I did not quite understand him then, and was somewhat frightened of him besides; but I have since thought that there could never have been a better father of a family than Uncle MacIlroy. Firm he was, never allowing the slightest breach of discipline; his will was in all things supreme, his “yea” was *yea* and his “nay,” *nay*; nobody ever dreamed of opposing either. Yet he was so right in all he did, so just, above all so thoroughly *true*—exact in speech, punctual alike in commands and in promises—that every body loved, and in the best sense of the word, honoured him.

When I came to live with Uncle MacIlroy I first learned to regret, what I have often regretted since, that I had never known what it was to have a father.

Of my aunt it is hardly necessary to speak, except that she was a worthy wife to such a worthy man. She is living still, and I think if she heard it, this my simple description of her would be the very one of which she would most approve.

Nephews, I hope you don't find these facts very uninteresting. I state them, not as being what I observed then, but as the results of after reflection concerning those boyish days. If you object to my dilating so much upon "elderly" people, I can only say that in telling this story I prefer rather to raise your minds above their level than to depress them, remembering that you can't ever be younger, and that you are fast advancing toward the time when you will yourselves be grown men and heads of families.

(There arose a little laugh at this, but it was soon stilled by Uncle Philip's extreme gravity, for he was on his hobby, one not rare to old bachelors, the proper mode of ruling a family. No one could get him off it, so there was little more autobiography that night.)

CHAPTER III.

("An adventure, an adventure to night, Uncle Philip! Surely you must have had something of the kind during the time you were at Dunoon.")

Uncle Philip, who was just about to begin his relation, looked puzzled. "Do you mean the sort of adventures that used to happen to me in the Punjaub, such as attacks from the natives, or tiger-fights in jungles, or being half drowned in crossing rivers, or those sort of little tribulations?"

His nephews laughed, and said they only wanted boyish adventures; something queer, and interesting, and true, and dangerous, but in a small way of course.

"Land or water adventures?"

There were dissentient voices, but "water" carried the day.

"I have it!" said Uncle Philip. "Fetch me the map of Scotland.")

Now, boys, I daresay it seems to you but a small distance from Dunoon, round that point of


land, and across to Greenock; yet I assure you it is nine or ten English miles. This was the longest pull we boys had ever had.

We planned it, I scarce remember why, one day when Uncle McIlroy was away at Glasgow. Otherwise probably we might not have been allowed to do it. But it was such a delicious exploit, that even the long-headed prudent Norman gave in to the excitement of the plan.

Another reason we had, was that little Gracie, who, in spite of her weakness, was a fearless child, and very fond of the water, longed to see more of the river than in her helpless state she was ever likely to see, except in our nice boat, where she was carried every day, and sat in the stern on cushions, looking, as one day Norman said—"just like Queen Cleopatra sailing down the Cydnus."

She begged to go, and as she was a great pet with us all, why—she went.

I well remember that day. It was about eight in the morning, for of course we had to start very early. There was a soft mist over the river, but not so as to make our boating dangerous, and the sun was very bright and warm. We had picked out our crew with great care and pride; choosing only those who could be useful and row; so the number dwindled down into Norman, Hector, James the



third brother, a funny, clever little fellow, who we thought would keep us alive with his jokes, save that though he could handle an oar pretty well, he was apt to get excited and terrified,—and lastly, myself. Little Gracie was our only passenger.

She asserted that we ought to have, in true nautical fashion, a distinguishing mark for our boat's crew; so, determined that we should do everything grand, she fastened sprays of ivy in all our hats, just where the sailors wear the name of their vessels. A pretty fancy of the child's; and we were all ready to please her.

At last we started from the West Bay, greatly to the admiration of a group of boatmen, who, when we told them the port we were bound to, opened their eyes wide, and wished us safe back again. But we were bold, and had no fears.

After some discussion, we settled that the wisest way to steer our voyage, so as to keep clear of our great terror—the steamers, that were then beginning to ply up and down the Clyde pretty frequently, though in nothing like such numbers as at present,—was to go right across to the Clough Point, and then follow the windings of the shore up to Greenock.

This being decided, off we flew like an arrow; Gracie striking up one of her merry songs. She had the sweetest voice I ever heard in a child.

(Uncle Philip here spoke hesitatingly, as he always did whenever he alluded to little Gracie; but he seemed to think she was necessary to the history, so always mentioned her name with the rest. The children heard it silently and with awe, as young people always listen to the mention of one that is dead.)

We had not started long when there arose one of those difficulties which prove the unerring truth, that in every collective body, there must be one to rule. There lie, a little way out in the river, opposite Dunoon, a small cluster of rocks, called the Gauntlets. Now, Hector wanted to row outside the Gauntlets, and little Jamie, who was terribly afraid of steamers, and ready to scream if he saw the smoke of one winding up the river two or three miles off, insisted on going inside the rocks. And, he being steersman, while Hector and I had the oars, he guided the helm and turned the boat in one direction, while we were labouring hard to pull her in another; the consequence was, our making no way at all. In fact, after rather a vehement altercation, we ended in lying upon the water, quite stationary.

Gracie ceased her singing, as well she might amidst such loud voices. She looked appealingly to Norman, who was stretched his length in the

bow of the boat, very cosy indeed. He waited for a lull in the storm of contention, and then spoke.

"Pray, boys, do you ever intend to get to Greenock to-day?"

"Of course," said Jamie.

"Then you'll reach it somewhere about six P.M., if you go on at this rate. Do you not think it would be better to use your oars than your tongues?"

This reproof, given so cheerfully and merrily, made us all laugh, and then James and Hector began to explain their several wrongs to their elder brother. I fancy I see him yet; the old fashioned little fellow, sitting listening as grave as a judge, but with a queer twinkle in his bright eye, that made us laugh amidst all our quarrellings. For I was as bad as the others, thinking it very shameful that our pleasure should be spoiled by Jamie's foolish fears.

"I'll tell you what it is," said he at last. "Father's saying is quite true, 'that there's no doing anything without a head.' Every kingdom must have a king, or even if it's a republic—a president; every expedition must have a leader, and every ship a captain. Now ours has no captain at all; that's why we have all gone wrong."

Everybody assented to this fact; but, as was to be expected, in trying to remedy it, the matter be-

came more puzzling than before. Everybody wanted to be captain.

However, James seceding from the contest, the choice lay between Hector and me. Hector seemed to expect the honour of right, as being the biggest and boldest of the crew, until Gracie gently suggested that in a ruler and guide prudence was as essential as courage, and I was much the more prudent of the two. Strangely enough, but naturally, in the heat of our contest, nobody seemed to think that the best captain, and the one who had chief right to the honour, was the only one who sat quiet and held his tongue.

When the war of words grew hottest, Norman's voice was at last raised ; and so seriously, that we heard it above all ours.

"Hollo, you foolish fellows ! Look a-head !"

We had good need ; for there was a steamer, which in the height of our uproar we had not noticed, bearing down upon us as fast as ever she could come.

James uttered a shrill scream and let go the helm, which little Gracie, terrified as she was, had yet the sense to hold.

"Pull away, Hector," I shouted—"Pull for your life."

But Hector's bold cheek had turned quite white,

and his hands seemed trembling and paralysed, so that instead of long strokes, his oar only made ineffectual splashes in the water.

"Hold still, James," said Norman, in the loudest and most commanding tone I had ever heard from him. "Hector, give me the oar! Steady with the helm, Gracie dear! Now, Phil, pull away, right into the middle of the stream, outside the Gauntlets."

James gave another scream at this order.

"*Outside* the Gauntlets, I say. Do you not see she's keeping close in shore? We'll be out of her track in two minutes, and then we're all right."

Frightened as I was, and I own to the fact, there was something in my eldest cousin's steady, resolute, and perfectly composed manner, which gave me strength. The two other lads sat quite still and subdued. Gracie, pale as death, but perfectly quiet, kept her eyes firmly fixed on Norman's face, and implicitly obeyed his orders about the helm. He and I pulled together with all our might, and in about three minutes we were clear of the steamer's course, and far into the middle of the river. But it was the longest three minutes I had ever known in my life.

"Now, lads," said Norman, when we all paused to breathe and consider the danger we had escaped, "you see what you would have gained. You were

so busy squabbling, and I watching you, that we never saw that boat at the pier. Another minute and she would have run us down."

"I do not believe she would," said Hector, brightening up. "Steamers always keep a good look out for small boats. I think you made a great fuss about nothing, Norman."

"Look there!" cried Jamie. "She has passed over the very place where we were lying. We should all have gone to the bottom for sure. I'll never go in a boat with Hector again. Oh! how will we ever get to Greenock alive!"

Here poor little Gracie, who had sat quite calm during the danger, now that it was over began to feel the effects of her terror. We had to dip our hands in the salt water, and dash a little on her face, and pour down her throat some of the ale that Norman had wisely brought with us, before she came quite to herself. This little incident subdued us all very much, and I even proposed rowing back; but Gracie would not allow it. Only she hinted a plan, which I believe in our heart we were all thankful enough to assent to,—that for the rest of the voyage Norman should be made sole and supreme captain.

And a very hard business he had of it, poor fellow, with such an insubordinate crew. The helm was left in Gracie's care; it pleased her, poor child, and

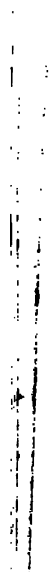
Norman and I carried Gracie between us, in the fashion they call "ladies' cushion." Hector went before, poising the oars, one on each shoulder, and Jamie followed with the rudder. In this triumphal procession we reached the house of the good folk with whom we intended to spend the day, and, I must say, slightly "astonished the natives" by our sudden appearance and the story of our exploits.

We performed no more feats, however, as we were not allowed to row home by ourselves. Our small crew was divided into two boats, and in the early evening merrily we again set sail. We had no more hair-breadth escapes or perilous doings; but I remember we had a great deal of fun; our two boats' crews running races, splashing each other with oars, and hallooing contemptuous defiance over the quiet river. I remember too—though faintly, for I was too young to take much notice of such things, except that I had quiet fancies beyond my own age—I remember how black and grand the hills looked after sunset, and how a red ball of fire rose out of the river behind us, at which I was half frightened until I found out that it was the full harvest moon.

Also I remember Gracie's singing out of the other boat, (Hector had made me come and pull with him in our own)—how very beautiful, and at the same time melancholy, the voice sounded, especially when



LADIES CUSHION



they gradually rowed away and disappeared in the mist that was creeping over the water. I listened, catching at times a fragment of Gracie's singing, or of their talking. I did not mind so long as we could hear them, if ever so faintly: but when all ceased, the river seemed wide and dark. They reached home first.

("Well boys," said Uncle Philip, abruptly stopping, "I think this is enough for to night").

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN next day Uncle MacIlroy came back, and heard of our exploit, which even now I cannot help thinking *was* an exploit, considering that we were all lads under fourteen, and none of us, not even my cousins, had had much nautical experience,—when my uncle learned the fact, he was half angry and half amused. He compared us to Ulysses sailing west in search of the fortunate islands, Jason rowing to Colchis after the Golden Fleece, and various other naval heroes of antiquity, with whom his own boys at least were quite familiar.

But he strictly forbade our again voyaging to Greenock, or anywhere else, without the parental permission.

“There is nothing I admire more than a courageous spirit,” said my uncle, “but remember, boys, that fool-hardiness will never make a *hero*.”

This observation sent me back to the old notion about my cousins, which I had never got out of my

head, though I could not by any means form a decision on the subject. This last adventure on the river, wherein Hector, the object of my great admiration, had proved himself at once so foolishly daring and so dangerously timid, made my mind more uncertain than ever.

"Pray, uncle," I asked, with desperate resolution, "which of my cousins is it who, I understand, is a hero?"

He seemed at once astonished and amused, and began to laugh so heartily that, in great confusion, I ran out of the room without waiting for an answer.

The same day, we being still considerably tired and stiff with our long pull, were glad enough to do nothing but take a quiet walk along the shore. The first place that we went to was the Castle-hill, a curious ruin, on which my uncle lectured very learnedly to his boys. I myself found the conversation dull enough, and took far greater pleasure in running up and down the little hill, chasing the sheep that were feeding there, and leaping from side to side of the crumbling gateway, the chief remnant of mason-work left, at the imminent risk of my precious life.

I was alone too—even Hector, usually my associate in all kinds of fun, had for once given up his

frolics to listen to his father's learned dissertations. For Hector, in addition to his physical advantages, was a very clever boy, and was being educated for a minister. When he chose he could be as sedate as Norman; and I sometimes thought his intellect was the stronger, certainly the brighter, of the two.

I happened to come behind the father and sons while they were talking; it was about the olden times, when this dilapidated place had been a fine fortress, under the hands of the Campbells of Argyle, and another ruin which Uncle MacIlroy pointed out down the shore, Castle Toward, was in the possession of the head of the Lamont Clan.

("This is possibly uninteresting to you, lads; but stay till you grow older. Information is always valuable;" observed Uncle Philip.)

"They must have been a lot of brave fellows in those days," said Hector, his eyes brightening while his father related some of the incidents of warfare that took place between the Clans of Lamont and Campbell, "I never knew they were such grand heroes."

"Heroes! I am not so sure of that," answered my uncle, thoughtfully (and you may be sure, boys, that I listened attentively as soon as I caught his first word). "It depends upon what consists our notion of a hero. Remind me, Hector, that I read

you a passage out of an old book I have, when we get home."

("Now, nephews," broke off Captain Philip Carew, "if one of you will bring me that big volume there, I can read you the very passage which I then heard from my uncle. It made a great impression on me at the time, and rather altered my notions concerning the 'heroic days' of ancient history.")

The quotation ran thus:—

"In 1646, certain of the clan of the Marquis of Argyle, having besieged and forced to surrender the houses of Toward and Escog, then the property of Sir James Lamont, did most treacherously fetter the hands of near two hundred persons of the said Sir James's friends and followers, detaining them prisoners, with a guard, their hands being bound behind their backs like thieves, within the said Sir James's house and yards of Toward, for the space of several days, in great torment and misery. In pursuance of their further villany, after plundering all within and without the house, they barbarously murdered several, young and old, yea, sucking children, some of them not one month old.

"The said persons, in 1646, most traitorously and perfidiously did carry the whole people who were in the houses of Escog and Toward, in boats to the village of Dunoon, and there most cruelly cause to hang upon one tree, near the number of thirty-six persons, most of them being special gentlemen of the house of Lamont, and vassals to the said Sir James."

("A pretty set these 'heroes' must have been," observed Uncle Philip, looking up; "but," he added, with a sigh, remembering the Punjaub, "we are not much better now.")

"Others were likewise barbarously and unchristianly murdered with dirks, and cut down with swords and pistols; John Jamieson, then provost of Rothesay, being shot through the body, they finding some life in him, did thrust several dirks and skeans at him, and at last did cut his throat with a long dirk. And to manifest their further cruelty, they did cast some of the aforesaid persons into holes made for them, who were spurning and wrestling whilst they were suffocated with earth; having denied them any time to recommend themselves to God, although earnestly begged and desired to do so by the said murdered persons. Insomuch, that the Lord from Heaven did declare His wrath against such inhuman cruelty, by striking the tree whereon they were hanged, in the said month of June, being a lively, fresh-growing tree, at the kirk-yard of Dunoon, among many other trees with leaves; the Lord struck the said tree immediately thereafter, so that the whole leaves fell from it, and the tree withered, never bearing leaves thereafter."

"Not very likely, after having borne the unprecedented fruit of six-and-thirty hanged men," observed Uncle MacIlroy, when he had read the passage which I have just now read to you; "But," continued he, "this is no matter for jest. It is a

pretty specimen of what, in those days, was generally considered heroism."

I started; as well I might.

"But, father, surely all the heroes of that time were not as brutal as these Campbells," said Norman gently—he had a faculty for always hinting, or insinuating the best side to every subject.

"No," answered Uncle MacIlroy, turning over the leaves of his big book; "here is a story, about the same part of the country, which to my thinking, quite counteracts the former one. I'll tell it to you, not just now, but when we come home from our evening walk; it will put out of your poor mother's head the horrible story of this massacre at Dunoon, which I see she is still shuddering at; and, moreover, will give you lads some notion of what *I* consider a hero."

This was a brilliant idea. So we took our twilight walk, talking over the account my uncle had read. Very strange it was to see the hills looking so quiet in the direction of Castle Toward, and to climb the deserted castle-hill of Dunoon, with the moon shining over it. How different, when we thought of those olden days! in which, nevertheless, we took a marvellous interest; boys do so delight in stories of warfare and battles.

We talked the whole subject over thoroughly, and even walked round by the kirk-yard, trying to imagine where stood the marvellous ash tree, and to picture how it must have looked, with the six-and-thirty hanged wretches dangling in the air, amidst the beauty of that June night, in the year 1646.

"Norman," said I to my cousin, as we passed on, "do you think there ever was anybody who deserved to be called a hero?"

He smiled, but made no answer; for just then we were entering our own door.

After tea, Uncle MacIlroy told us the story he had promised; a true and well-authenticated legend, which I will here relate—not in his own words, as of course I cannot remember them exactly—but I shall keep close to the facts, which have not in the least faded from my recollection.

The Lamonts of Castle Toward, for a number of generations, headed the most powerful clan along the northern bank of the estuary of the Clyde.

("Most of you English boys know what a *clan* is," said Uncle Philip, interrupting himself; "still, for the benefit of the younger ones, I may as well say, that it means a numerous tribe of men, all bearing the same surname, and probably originally sprung from the same stock, united under one chieftain, whom they implicitly obey, continuing their

allegiance from father to son. It is, in truth, the Scottish form of the feudal system, which you have all read about in your History of England—except that the Highland retainers all bear their chieftain's surname, and mostly claim the same descent from one patriarch of the race. This is the simplest form of government extant, and dates from the earliest times; in fact, we may consider good Father Adam himself to have been the first chieftain of the first clan."

All laughed at Uncle Philip's odd conceit, and professed themselves quite satisfied with his explanation.)

Some centuries ago, though no date is assigned, the chief of the Lamont Clan happened to be a mere youth. His father had probably been killed in one of the various squabbles which were common then, when everybody seemed at once to fight to live, and to live to fight; when nobody thought of working, but if he wanted a cow, or a drove of sheep, stole them from his neighbour, and kept them till his neighbour grew the strongest, and stole them back again.

In truth, the system of public law then was very much what it is in boys' schools now—might, not right, was the general rule, and the best fighter was sure to carry all before him. Thus, the Lamonts, being very numerous and strong, held the whole west

country in subjection ; and did so, until, as you may remember, in that black year 1646, the Campbells of Argyle made such havoc among them. But the story I now relate happened long before then.

Young Lamont was on friendly terms with another chieftain, Macgregor of Glenstrae—I know nothing of Glenstrae, having never been there, but I believe it is on the shores of Loch Fyne. Macgregor had an only child, a young lad, something near Lamont's own age; and one day, during a visit that the latter was paying at Glenstrae, the two youths went out hunting together.

At night-fall, being far away from home, they, with some of Macgregor's retainers, took up their lodging in a hill-side cave; as, indeed, was and is the common habit of the hardy mountaineers.

During the night, from some trivial cause, on which tradition is silent, there happened,—what alas! was likewise not unfrequent in those warlike times,—a quarrel between the two young chieftains, mere lads as they were—lads, who now-a-days would just have had an honest battle with fists, fought it out, and been friends again. But in this blood-thirsty age the case was different. Young Lamont, in the heat of passion, drew out the dirk, which a Highland chieftain always wore, using it indiscriminately to slay a wounded deer, or to destroy an

enemy. In a moment, while the passion was upon him (and most of you lads know what the fury of passion is) he had stabbed the boy Macgregor to the heart!

It is worth pausing a moment, to think what must have been the feelings of Lamont—a noble and generous fellow in the main, as his after life shews—when, his momentary passion spent, he stood in the cave, looking at his playmate, his merry companion of an hour since, now lying there, a dead body and nothing more. People in those days thought more lightly of human life and of the sin of murder, than we do now; yet the young chieftain's sensations at the moment must have been of a very horrible kind.

Almost by miracle, Lamont got safe out of the cave; which, had the Macgregor clansmen detected him, he certainly never would have done, since the law of "blood for blood" was very strong, indeed almost the only *law* those lawless times could boast.

He escaped, and wandered about the forests for many hours; until he quite lost his way. At last, seeing a light in the distance, he made for it, and entered a house.

It was the very home he had quitted that morning—the home he had now made desolate.

Old Macgregor received him with unaffected cor-

diality, forcing him to enter. The unhappy murderer must have done so, scarcely aware of what he was about. But very soon Macgregor discerned that something had gone wrong, and knowing well the fierce passions of those times, was at no loss to guess the whole truth ; or else, which is not improbable, young Lamont confessed all.

It is hardly possible to imagine a sterner honour, a more rigid justice, or more heroic self-control, than that evinced by the father of the murdered boy towards the slayer of his only son ; especially in those times when, as I said before, the law of vengeance was almost the sole law existing.

The old chieftain not only shielded his wretched guest from the present fury of the Macgregor clansmen, who at day-break returned with the evil tidings, bearing along with them the body of the poor slain lad, but he himself concerted a plan to save young Lamont's life. Whether this was from a strong sense of the sacredness of hospitality, or whether from a merciful judgment of the deed—the same which in our days would have led a jury to pronounce it not exactly murder, but unpremeditated manslaughter—cannot now be known. Certain it is, that the bereaved father acted in this heroic fashion.

In the middle of the next night, he rose up,

ordering Lamont to follow him. He led the young chieftain over hill and forest, far away from Glenstrae, down to a place called *Dùn-na-ràmh*, on the shore of Loch Fyne. There, were lying a boat and oars.

"Take these," said the Macgregor sternly. "Use them for your life; on the opposite shore is your own country. Once there, let the murderer save himself if he can."

Lamont took the boat, with what words of gratitude the history does not relate; he rowed safe over to the other side, leaving the childless father standing on the shore.

* * * * *

Despite the unrelenting pursuit of the Macgregor clan, the Lamonts were too powerful for any harm to reach their head. He lived, safely entrenched in his own Castle Toward, and grew up from youth to manhood, from manhood to middle age. He is believed to have made a just and generous chieftain, and the clan Lamont flourished under his rule. Possibly, the awful event of his boyhood influenced his after life; but at this distance of time his character can only be judged by what is, indeed, the sole way of judging any character, in history or tradition—his recorded actions.

While the Lamonts prospered, the smaller and less

powerful clan, Macgregor of Glenstrae, was fast sinking. Its head, the childless father, the last of his race, was incompetent to rule; the whole clan, impoverished and weak, were oppressed by their stronger neighbours on every side. At last, by some great but not uncommon wrong-doing, Macgregor was stripped of his lands, and for no cause whatever, but merely to make a show of justice, declared a criminal and an outlaw.

* * * * *

One day, when Lamont was in the height of his power, there came a poor old man to the gates of Castle Toward. It was the unfortunate Macgregor of Glenstrae, who could find no shelter on earth, save with the man who had slain his only son, and whom he himself, and his whole clan, had pursued with unrelenting but useless vengeance for many years. A curious instance of the strange mingling of barbaric, ferocious justice and chivalrous honour, which prevailed in the middle ages.

Lamont joyfully received his former enemy, and became as a son to the unfortunate father whom he himself had made childless. For many years, Macgregor lived at Castle Toward, treated with infinite respect and tenderness. When he died, it was under Lamont's roof; and the chieftain's own hand closed his eyes. He was buried, tradition avouches, with all

the honours due to his rank, as the last Macgregor of Glenstrae. His place of burial was until very lately pointed out; it was in a little chapelry, dedicated to the Virgin, of which a few relics only now remain, situated on the farm of Toward-na-uillt.

"Now," said my uncle, when he had finished the story which I have here repeated, though I cannot give it with half the force that he did, with his terse, impressive language, and his strong yet pure accent, (for, as I afterwards found out, my Highland uncle, well-educated, and learned in many languages, spoke, and taught his boys to speak, far purer English than I did myself.) "Now," said he, turning upon us his bright blue eyes, "that is what I call a hero."

We assented eagerly; but the next moment a difference arose as to which chieftain was meant. Some stood up for young Lamont, and others for Macgregor of Glenstrae.

At last, little Gracie, whom, during the story, I had more than once seen with tears in her eyes—she was such a tender-hearted little lassie—Gracie solved the difficulty by proposing that they should both be considered as heroes.

The matter ended; Hector and I resolving to walk next day to the farm of Toward-na-uillt; in order, if possible, to find out the grave of Macgregor,—which we did.

("I wonder," continued Uncle Philip, musing, "whether the old chieftain's *manes*—you classic students know what *manes* are—were gratified by this homage paid by two school-boys to his memory. Well! it only shows how long a truly heroic action is remembered in the world. All the Lamonts and Macgregors that ever tore one another to pieces in blood-thirsty conflicts, have passed into comparative oblivion, from which is only rescued the memory of these two—real heroes!")

Captain Carew looked thoughtful for a minute; then, seeing his small audience were all dropping to sleep, he gave an impressive grunt, and ceased moralizing.)

CHAPTER V.

I THINK, that the brief time we stayed at Dunoon, just two or three weeks, renders my memory more vivid concerning all we did. There was one day, that with its termination (which had nearly been likewise the termination of our lives) recurs to me particularly just now.

It was the day before we left. My uncle had already gone to Glasgow and begun his classes; Norman and Hector ought to have likewise commenced theirs, only my aunt fancied that the former was delicate, and begged an extra week or two of holiday.

"How shall we make the most of this last day?" became the general question; some voted for boating—we certainly had grown water-mad. But Norman suggested that we could not possibly row up and down the Dunoon shore all day, and we were forbidden to go any further.

"Besides," as he sensibly remarked, "would it

not be better to tire our legs out first, and then resort to our arms? I propose that we should take a good long ramble up the hills all day, and have a nice pull in the evening."

So off we started; Norman, Hector, James, and I. There was a slight squabble previously, as to whether or no we should take any lunch with us; but we all had such an intense aversion to carrying a basket, that my aunt's entreaties were vain. However, I saw her quietly put a slice or two of dry bread into Norman's pockets; everybody was thoughtful over Norman, as he, in his turn, was thoughtful over every one.

We started, promising to be back in time to give Gracie a sail,—poor Gracie! who set us off so merrily, and yet when we reached the gate, we saw her looking after us with such longing wistful eyes.

Boy-like, we could not think of going up into the hills by the regular path, but determined to ascend up the bed of a stream, a beautiful *burn*, that came pouring merrily into the Clyde at the West Bay. It was a remarkable place, the water dashing over the slate rocks that formed high braes on either side of its course. I hear that now, when Dunoon is so changed, this stream has been bridged over, its wildness brought into elegant order, and an English chapel of the fashion called Puseyite (though I don't

quite like such nick-names in religious matters,) built on the top of one of the braes. Nevertheless, no modern innovations can have altogether spoiled that lovely little burn.

Nobody, who has lived only in a flat country, can have the least idea of what a stream really is in the Highlands. Not a quiet, bubbling, good-tempered brook, but a perfect torrent, which, be the volume of water great or small, is equally impetuous. It comes leaping from rock to rock, circling the larger stones, dashing over the little ones; divided here and there into half-a-dozen zig-zag channels, or again joined into one flow for perhaps a few yards, until the rocky impediments break it once more. Mostly, it is so shallow, that you can step through it, but by places it sinks into deep, still pools under the hollows of rocks; tempting, transparent, crystal baths, where you can almost see to the bottom. But it must be a very venturesome bather who would put his foot in *there*.

Such a stream was the one I speak of, up the channel of which we four merry boys went.

What fun, what laughing we had! How we took off our shoes and stockings and slung them over our shoulders, that we might the easier cling to the smooth stones. How delicious it was to feel the water dashing coldly over our bare feet, as we tried, by the puny resistance of those said feet planted

across lesser channels, to stop a current that was as resistless as time, or fate, or anything else of that sort.

("Upon my soul!" cried Uncle Philip breaking out into the only asseveration that, soldier though he was, he was ever known to use. "Upon my soul, when I talk of these things, I almost wish I were a boy again! But it won't do, it won't do!")

He continued, making an attempt to laugh:)

No felicity is without its vexations, and I remember we were desperately tormented by the midges, that would come about us in myriads, settling on our faces and stinging, till they almost drove us crazy. At length we stuck great leaves of fern, or bunches of heather, in our caps, with which the little wretches contented themselves in some small degree; though still they were all but insatiable. (So, boys, it is worth while to remember that the greatest merriment and happiness in life is sure, more or less, to be accompanied by—midges!)

I cannot call to mind every portion of our walk, or rather scramble, for we scorned anything like regular locomotion, but I know that our next tribulation was something worse than midges. We got into a bog.

I never can understand why, on mountain sides, which one might naturally expect to find dry, there should be such a deal of bog land. To me, an

English boy, quite unaccustomed to such a thing, I own it was not over pleasant. So unexpected, too, for the marsh we crossed looked pretty and green, had magnificent beds of moss; with, oh! such heather! And Gracie wanted some of both to take home to Glasgow.

On I plunged, choosing for a footing the greenest looking mosses, and always finding them the deepest in water. But I was too proud to confess the fact; so floundered silently on, seeing the other lads far before me. At last Norman turned and shouted for me to come on.

"Presently," answered I, putting a bold face on the matter; "but it's *rather* bad walking."

It certainly was; I being just then busy hunting for one of my shoes; in the search for which I left the other shoe behind me.

"Come on, Phil!" shouted the boys once more.

"I can't," cried I, piteously, despair at last subduing my courage, "I've lost my shoes, and I can't walk home barefoot. Will nobody come and help me?"

"What, you expect us to go back all through the bog!" Hector replied, from near the top of the hill. "Hurrah! I'm out of the moss now, and it's such a beautiful view. Make haste, boys."

Very easy that—with some dozen yards nearly

impassable, between me and the enviable hill top, to say nothing of the lost shoes. Except that I was ashamed, I could have sat down and cried. Once I thought of calling for Norman, but then I did not care so very much for him. Hector was my chief friend, and Hector had deserted me.

However, when I was standing sulky and disconsolate, looking at my stockings all tramped in holes, and my trowsers wet up to the knees, I found Norman beside me. He had come all the way without my asking him.

"Well, old fellow, and what's to be done for you? Here has Jamie been in just the same plight." (Oh, what a comfort that was!) "Come, cheer up, never mind!"

"I don't mind," said I proudly, "only if I could but find my shoes, considering I haven't another pair, and am not at home as you are." And I began to think mournfully how my poor mother had charged me to be very careful of my clothes, since she was not rich enough to buy me more for a long time. Horrible visions rose up of my having henceforward to go about barefoot, like the little ragged Scotch boys I so despised. It was an accumulation of woes.

Perhaps Norman saw I was sulky and tried no more consolation, except in a practical way. He

said nothing, but cut a long stick from a fallen tree, and poked about in all directions for a dozen yards round, until at last, after infinite patience, he found my shoes. I shall never forget my joy when he jokingly exhibited them one stuck upon each prong of the long stick.

“Thank you, Norman,” I cried, energetically.

“Stop, Phil, you cannot put them on. See how soaked they are ; they’d be the death of you ! Come, off with your stockings too ; put them in your pocket, and sling your shoes over your shoulder ; then you’ll be quite sure not to lose either.”

I own, I somewhat objected to this plan.

“Oh, nonsense, it will only teach you to be hardy. Feet were made to walk on ; do you think father Adam wore shoes ? Squeeze the wet out of your trowsers and roll them up to the knee ; then start off ; you need not mind the bog now. Bravo ! that’s the way to get over a difficulty.”

His cheery voice and manner would have encouraged anybody to do anything. He made so light of the trouble too, and bore his part of it—for he had got desperately wet—so uncomplainingly. Before I knew what I was about, I found myself laughing merrily—stepping from heather-tuft to heather-tuft as he told me. (Which general hint I throw out to

all bog-trotters, that where there's a heather-tuft, there is sure to be safe footing.) Very soon, we had nearly passed the region of my woes, out of which I had moreover contrived to bring a magnificent nose-gay for Gracie. At last we stood on the hill-top, and looked back on the bog we had safely got through.

("And that bog," added Philip Carew, meditatively, "was not the last from which, during our troubled journey through life, my cousin Norman has brought me safely out.")

This hill-top, which I have never climbed since, nor am ever likely to climb, afforded a scene which, boy as I was, I have never forgotten. It was a very narrow peak, quite bare, composed of a few rocks or stones thrown together like seats, with bits of heather, moss, or lichen growing upon them. The peak was high enough to afford a view of the Firth of Clyde, from Rothesay up to Greenock, or possibly further, only that the afternoon haze was stealing on. The river was perfectly calm, with very few boats on it—there was not a sound among the hills—not a cloud stirring in the sky—everything was as still as death; although it was such bright sunshine. There were a few sheep feeding far below us, but they only looked like white stones scattered on the hill-side: we never saw them move.

Somehow, wild boys as we were, the scene quieted us. We sat on the hill-top for half-an-hour, without talking at all—or only in whispers. Then I put on my shoes, which Norman had managed to dry on the hot sunny rocks, and we started off down the slope.

Now another disaster arose. We found, as we penetrated further down the woody side of the hill, that on it were feeding not merely the harmless sheep, but some Highland cattle, and little Jamie was dreadfully afraid of cows. His terrors were this time not quite so unfounded as usual, for I remembered that Uncle MacIlroy had himself warned us to be careful where we went, since there were sometimes very ferocious bulls found in unfrequented parts of the hills.

And when unluckily a black cow, rather wild and shaggy-looking, as all Highland cattle are, being possessed of an enquiring disposition, walked forward a dozen yards to take a mild survey of James, the poor wee fellow ran off screaming. The noise disturbed the animals still more. They began to look at one another, and at us, and really even I grew rather uncomfortable.

“Pooh!” said Hector, disdainfully, “who’s afraid, even if there is a bull? We must pass this way, and those that do not choose to go may stay on the hill-side all night.”

With that, he went daringly forward to meet our foes, and so outraged the feelings of the aforesaid black cow that I really think she would have run at him, but happily there was a broad ditch between them.

"Hector, do not be fool-hardy! Come back!" shouted Norman, in the imperative elder-brother tone he so rarely used; and Hector came, probably not very reluctantly, leaving the indignant little Highland beast to watch him with ferocious eyes.

"We cannot go through that pasture, it's quite evident," said Norman.

"But we will! Nobody is afraid but Jamie; let him stay behind."

"Now, Hector, that's not talking common sense. How *can* we leave the little fellow behind? Whether he's foolish or not, is another matter; anyhow there's no conquering his fears."

"He should have stayed at home then."

"So I think, Philip; but since he *is* here, we must just make the best of him. The question is, are we to leave him on the hills all night, or are we to get back another way? Try it, lads; there's great fun in finding out a new road. Here goes!"

He plunged into a small copse of nut trees and brambles, whence Jamie's frightened voice was heard in different directions, frantically calling on

us all in turns. Hector and I looked at one another rather discontentedly ; Hector muttering something about "little cowards that always spoil everything,"—then we followed. Somehow or other, whether we liked it or not, Norman generally had his way.

It was a great consolation to find lots of nuts in the nut-wood, and in the enthusiasm of hunting for them, we quite forgot to abuse poor Jamie. We compelled him to cram his pockets with our surplus nuts, until we found that he ate them so fast as to be anything but a trusty guardian of the spoil. So we quarrelled and made it up again, grumbled and laughed, shouted and sang—Norman being as wild as any of us ; until suddenly we discovered that the sun was getting low, and the nut-wood dark ; and beside we had not the dimmest notion where we were. We were very hungry too, in spite of all our nut-eating, and were beginning to feel tired and cross, especially Jamie. He had just proposed our going home, when the unpleasant idea presented itself, that we really did not know how to get there.

We three elders had a serious consultation, while Jamie sat and cried.

"Look," said Norman, "there's a white line running along the foot of the hills. Now that must be a high road, and a high road must lead somewhere. Suppose we strike to it, in a straight cut, through

bushes, bogs, and everything. It will be an adventure ; and as to mud, why, we can't be much worse than we are now."

We looked dejectedly upon our torn and dirty habiliments, soaked to the knees, and acknowledged that fact at once.

"Come then, before it grows late ; let's start boldly."

"I canna," sobbed Jamie, "I'm so hungry, and nuts are not like one's dinner. I'm so thirsty, and we have not seen a stream."

"You goose," cried Hector, "do you think we are not all hungry and thirsty too, only we would be ashamed to make such a fuss about it. Get up, James, and let's be off."

"Stay, lad," interposed Norman, catching his little brother by the shoulder, and arresting a most pitiful and disconsolate outcry. Then, out of that blessed pocket of his, he drew a great lump of dry bread—very dry indeed, and warmed through ; but, nevertheless, eatable bread. Did'n't we eat it ! with most hearty gusto too, though I'm afraid we were too hungry to say "thank you." Except that Hector, having finished his piece, and wanting some more, which was of course not to be had, slapped his brother energetically on the back, saying—

"Never mind ! you are a trump, old fellow."

"Now for water; there must be some hereabouts," observed Norman, and we went a little way and listened. Sure enough, there was the faint tinkle of a spring, falling, a drop at a time. We followed the sound, so indistinct, that except in that region of perfect quietness we could not have heard it at all.

"Bravo! here it is," shouted Hector. "Now, Phil, do you wish to see a Highland spring?"

It certainly was the slenderest rivulet imaginable, oozing drop by drop out of a moss bed, and running under the roots of the heather, a mere thread of water. But it *was* water; and it grew and grew, we tracking it for a few yards by the sound of its trickle, though we could not see it, until at last, coming to a rock a few feet high, it had to make a great leap, and in that leap suddenly discovered itself to be a stream.

Oh, the delight of drinking it up! which we did literally, for it was such a tiny runnel that our mouths laid across the current stopped it up entirely. Moreover, the water had in a slight degree the peculiar iron taste given by running through bog land. Nevertheless, we thought it delicious; and I looked upon Norman with as much respect as if he had discovered the source of an important river, which, for all I know, he really had, since every

river must have been, once upon a time, a little trickling mountain spring.

All being refreshed, Norman gave the word to start. What a scramble it was, down a sloping thicket of nut-wood and brambles, a descent always at an angle of forty-five degrees (you boys know thus much of geometry). A descent, likewise, which was marshy ground the whole way. Nothing was heard but plunges, tumbles, and outcries; yet the thing was so funny, we could none of us help laughing. Except Jamie, who in despair gave himself up to his fate, and was quite sure he never should reach home alive.

"Well," said Hector, "if the worst comes to the worst, we can but stop on the hills all night, as people do when they go deer-stalking. I should like it very much; it would be just like Robinson Crusoe."

But, seeing that this alternative frightened the tired Jamie more than ever, Hector, really a kind and generous boy, took his little brother on his back, and they two went floundering on together.

"Good news!" cried Norman, who was in advance, "we have come at last to the foot of the hill and the end of the bog. Here is a stream, which must run somewhere, and I think from the direction it takes, must run towards the high road which leads

towards Dunoon. Jamie, you're clever at the points of the compass, tell us what you think?"

Jamie, thus ingeniously appealed to, stopped crying at once, and looked about him. He declared he knew the place, and that the little loch we saw close by was near the high road from Loch Eck to Dunoon.

"He's quite right; Jamie's a sensible wee fellow," said the elder brother kindly. "If we track the course of this burnie, we'll come out all right, and to save trouble in getting through the brambles, I propose that we take off our shoes and stockings and wade."

This plan of aquatic transit was greatly admired, and certainly the bed of the stream made a most admirable pathway, quite easy compared with the bogs we had gone through. We performed the exploit capitally, with much laughing and fun and without any disaster; only as we neared the high road, we heard the voices of some Dunoon ladies passing, and at my earnest entreaty, we four torn, muddied, bare-legged laddies crept under a bush until they had gone by. For which act of timid propriety on my part, my cousins tormented me the whole way home; telling me I had always lived among girls, and was just a girl myself; until I furiously proposed they should all fight me, and try.

Somehow or other, we got home. Little Gracie

was sitting in the bow window, watching for us very anxiously. My aunt had been too busy to vex herself much; besides it was not much later than we usually came home. Returning, we had mutually agreed to keep our own counsel, and tell none of our dangers and disasters, that night at least. So when after tea Gracie innocently asked if we had enjoyed ourselves, and if, supposing we were not too tired, we would take her one last sail in the dear little boat? it became necessary to answer yes.

Looking out, we found the twilight had gradually melted into the most lovely moonlight. Gracie crept to the hall door, holding by Norman's shoulder, and came back singing one of our English nursery rhymes which I had taught her, and which took her fancy very much—

“The moon doth shine as bright as day,
Boys and girls come out to play,
Come with a rattle and come with a call,
Come with a good will, or come not at all.”

She sang it so prettily; she could put a tune to anything she liked—she was such a clever little girl.

Well, I don't remember how we coaxed my aunt to let us go, seeing it was eight o'clock at night; but we certainly did get leave, promising to remain out but a little while, at which promise we were ready enough, being much tired.

But somehow the brilliant moon making everything as clear as day, the river being very calm, and our boat lightly laden, (there were in it just Norman, Hector, Gracie, and I)—we stayed out longer than we intended. Gracie was so merry; singing at the very top of her clear voice, clear as that of a little golden wren; it made one wonder how such a volume of rich sound could come out of so slender a throat.

We were pulling up and down the West Bay, listening to Gracie's singing, or at intervals making a tremendous noise ourselves, by shouting to an echo that we had found out at a particular spot in the bay, and which answered us from shore in most unearthly mimicry of our words, and especially our laughter; the latter became a "ha, ha!" perfectly demoniacal.

Gracie suddenly stopped us with "Look! is not that a steamboat at the pier?"

"I don't think it," Norman answered, "it's too late an hour for steamers. Yet that certainly must be one; I wonder which way her head is. I did not see her pass up, so she must be coming in our direction. Pull away, Hector; Phil, take the other oar!"

"No, no!" cried Hector, who was showing off his skill with both oars, "we are quite far enough in shore; besides, I would like to catch her waves."

"Ah do! and let us have a nice rock on them; 'tis for the last time this summer," begged Gracie.

Norman assented, knowing that there was no danger in the harmless see-saw of the waves, which his sister was so fond of. In fact, there was no time for refusal, since when he was yet speaking the steamer, which in the uncertain light proved nearer and larger than we thought, had passed us by. For a minute all was still, and then I saw her waves—great long rollers, hills of water, with deep clefts between—advancing slowly in the light of the moon.

"Ship your oars!" cried Norman, who was looking fixedly at the rollers, which Hector, sitting backwards, could not see.

"Oh how nice and large they are!" said Gracie, quite fearless.

They were indeed large, larger than I had ever seen; they came on huge, steady, resistless. I remembered having heard Norman say there was no danger to any boat in a mere swell, but only when the waves rose into breakers, curled over, crested, and broke. And looking at these, I saw slowly gather at one end a white crest of foam.

"Steady! Keep her head to the waves! Now ship your oars," said Norman, in a quick whisper. Our eyes met, and *we* both understood—we two only—that the next minute would decide whether the boat,

already sinking aslant in the watery hollow, should again rise up on the wave, or go down to the bottom like a shot.

Boys ! it was an awful minute. I remember seeing Norman steal his arm firmly round Grace ; I knew what he did that for. She, poor child, sat smiling, and Hector too. It was, I say again, an awful minute !

The boat plunged down head foremost,—and rose up again ! We were saved.

Other waves came, but less than the first ; the little boat rocked harmlessly on the swell.

“ It’s grand ! ” cried Hector. “ But, Norman ! Philip ! what’s the matter with you ? ”

“ Only that we have all been within an inch of our lives, and are safe. Thank God ! ”

I had not thought of that thanksgiving. It made me feel that Norman was a better boy than I.

“ Now, pull ashore, quick ! ” added he, taking the trembling Gracie in his arms. Hector, horrified at the past danger, obeyed. We rowed home and landed without speaking a word.

CHAPTER VI.

(" WELL, boys, are you not getting tired of my story? It is becoming as long as those of Dinarzade, in the Arabian Nights. Do any of you, contrary to the sultan, want to cut off my head, in order to put an end to my tale?")

Uncle Philip's question, with its very mild amount of humour, produced great merriment, and hearty "Noes," on the part of his young audience, who settled themselves at once for another "night's entertainment.")

You will hear no more Highland adventures, nephews, since after the last unlucky boating we left Dunoon; which, I now think, was very fortunate; Hector and I were growing so wondrously daring, or rather fool-hardy, (for there is a mighty difference between fool-hardiness and courage) that otherwise I don't believe we should ever have quitted the place alive.

Very loth we were to quit it, nevertheless, and grumbled extremely all the way up the Clyde;

especially Hector and I, for Norman was too busy looking after the luggage, and making jokes for the purpose of keeping the younger children quiet. We used to call him "the nursery girl," from his care over his little brothers and his great popularity among them; which popularity Hector and I rather disdained than emulated. But Norman only laughed at our quizzing.

The steamer went lazily between the narrowing banks of the river, very much like an overgrown goose trying to swim along a small, dirty, and ugly stream—I never saw any water so muddily black as the beautiful blue Clyde becomes near Glasgow; only it was some fun to watch the boiling eddies that the steamer produced on either bank as she passed, so extremely narrow was the channel.

"Really," said I, "how stupid the people were to build Glasgow here. I wonder any ships can ever manage to get up this poor dirty bit of a river. We should never think of it in England."

"Very likely not," answered Hector with wondrous dignity; "but we Scotch can do anything anywhere, and make anything out of anything."

Of course I indignantly scouted this fact; but I half begin to think there was some truth in it. And, viewing Glasgow, not as I did then, with prejudiced and limited boyish vision, but as I should now, it

seems to me a wonderful place. Ugly as it is, or was in those days, it keenly strikes a thoughtful mind, as every commercial city must. One may liken it to the roots of a great tree, tangled, dirty, unsightly fibres, but which nevertheless stretch out far and wide, often wider than the branches, and upon whose strength the whole stability, health, and beauty of the tree depends. Therefore I have a marvellous respect for the western metropolis of Scotland, and say with all my heart, as says the motto on those atrociously ugly city arms, "*Let Glasgow flourish!*"

Little did we boys then care about these things; we only thought, as we landed at the Broomielaw (which I remember I had unaccountably supposed to be a bank of flowering broom, and discovered to my confusion, that it was a thicket of masts, just like St. Katharine's Docks) we only thought that we were coming back to a disagreeable town life—to dullness and school.

"Ah," sighed Hector, as we passed the ferry, where the ferryman sat in his clumsy barge, handling his still clumsier oars; "Ah, that is all the boating we'll have for months to come! just crossing the dirty Clyde and back."

We both pulled melancholy faces and thought it very hard.


It was on a Saturday that we came home—I now called my uncle's house *home* quite naturally,—on the Monday the boys were to begin their "classes," for here I found everybody said "going to classes," instead of "going to school." On Sunday night, Hector, Norman, and I lay awake for hours,—we all slept in the same room, they in their bed, and I on the floor, which I thought great fun. There I heard a deal of talk, to me quite mysterious, about "third year," "fourth year;" "dux," "Doctor Cowe," "prize," "examination," etc., etc. In the midst of which I gradually fell asleep.

I was awakened, at what I thought an unearthly early hour, by the ringing of a most unearthly bell. Norman jumped up, shook Hector into wakefulness, at the which he growled furiously, and then performed the same kind office for me.

"No use grumbling, Phil!—up at seven—prayers at half-past—breakfast at eight—off to classes at nine! It's father's way, and *must* be done. Tumble up, lad!"

I did "tumble up" very sulkily, with strong intentions of rebellion against Uncle MacIlroy. But as soon as ever I saw him, I began to fear my bold resolutions were all thrown away.

He came down stairs, his hair flying abroad more than ever, with a most resolute, business-like, head-



of-a-family look, quite different from that he wore in our holiday-time. As I have before said, Uncle MacIlroy was a very good man, and a very kind man; but I never saw anybody look more stern than he could, when he chose. And when he, in his quiet way, issued a command,—“boys, do so and so!”—you would as soon attempt to jump over the moon, as not do it.

So when, after prayers and breakfast were over, the latter being almost as gravely gone through as the former, while Norman and Hector, both very quiet now, were busy looking over their books,—my uncle called me into his study, I did not dare to refuse.

An awful place was that study, all lined with books, and thickly scattered with papers; he was such a learned man, though fate had ordained that he should never be anything more than a school-master.

“Philip, come here; nay, do not be frightened.” (I dare say I looked so). “Have you ever been to school?”

“N-no, uncle, not exactly!” In fact, I had gained all my little learning from my poor dear mother (a very clever woman grandmamma was in her youth, boys.) I timidly stated this to Uncle MacIlroy.

"Um—yes—I see. Has she taught you Latin?"

"A little."

"Delectus?—Cæsar?—Ovid?"—my uncle never wasted words.

"I'm in Virgil; my mother likes Virgil best."

"Oh! let us see what you can do," and he took down a great musty looking Æneid, all mouldy and dogs'-eared inside, though most carefully bound; no doubt a very valuable edition, but it only frightened me the more. "Now, Philip, begin."

"*Arma virumque cano*," tremblingly I commenced, pronouncing my *a*'s short, English fashion.

"*Arma (y) vyrumquee ca (y) no*," mimicked my uncle, shaking his head—"boy! that will never do here, you would be the laughing-stock of your class. There is not a country in the world where they pronounce Latin so, except in England. Try it this way."

And in his sonorous, musical voice—broadening out the *a*'s and *e*'s, Italian fashion—he read the lines:—

"*Arma virumque cano, Trojæ qui primus ab oris
Italiam, fato profugus, Lavinia venit
Littora.*"

"Now, Philip, go on."

I was obliged to do so, my Saxon pride rebelling

at every word. Though now I think my Uncle MacIlroy and "every country in the world," are quite as likely to be correct in their notion of pronouncing Latin as the solitary opinion of John Bull.

("Oh, oh, oh!" groaned some of Uncle Philip's audience, staunch Westminster boys.

"Well, nephews, the thing's not worth fighting about," smiled he, and continued.)

Whether or no I passed my examination with credit, I cannot tell; certain it was, that my uncle, putting away the terrible Virgil, desired me to get ready and join his class in the High School.

Here was an encroachment on the liberty of a boy and a Briton! I absolutely stood aghast.

"And," continued my uncle, not taking the slightest notice, "since, as you will not be here all the session, it is useless your taking other classes, I shall give you evening lessons myself in whatever I may think you require. Now away with you; the boys will shew you my class-rooms. Remember, half-past nine, *invariably*. I never excuse want of punctuality."

He patted my head ("The old hypocrite!" I thought) and sent me away.

There was no help for it. All the nice long lounging mornings I had planned, to be spent in drawing Gracie's little carriage, or playing jack-

straws and cat's cradle with Willie and Wattie, for at heart I dearly loved laziness, all—all were put an end to! I regarded my uncle as a terrible tyrant, and thought if any of my cousins had been the "Hero" my mother alluded to, they would not have stood it for a single week. I had some notions of setting up for "a hero" myself, and running away home. I had even got the map to calculate how far it was from Glasgow to Surrey, when I heard Norman's voice calling me, and found that I must make up my mind to be a slave—for one day more.

"But to-morrow, to-morrow"—I said to myself; and kept my counsel safe, even from my cousins.

They, honest lads, trudged merrily through the muddy streets, for it was what malicious strangers call "a regular Glasgow day," which sort of day is the most abominable specimen of weather I ever met with anywhere.

"Never mind it, lad!" laughed Norman. "Mud never killed a body yet; and smoke, Glasgow smoke, is considered very good for the lungs. 'Tis the healthiest town in Scotland, father says."

"Probably," said I maliciously; and stumbled on, trying hard to feel cross, and not being able to manage it.

"You'll not be in the same room with us, Phil," observed Hector, as we entered a quadrangle, where

stood a building looking very scholastic and college-like. "Father has the third year this session, and we are in the fourth year."

"What do you mean by such nonsense as third year and fourth year? Surely I am not going to be set to learn with little brats three years old?"

"That's a good joke—go it again, Sulky!" cried Hector in great glee. But Norman explained to me that the classes were arranged in this fashion, according to the number of years the boys had learnt Latin.

"As Hector said, we are in the fourth year, under Doctor Cowe. Isn't it a droll name? And he is such a funny old fellow. But—hush! here he comes."

We drew back on the dirty—yes, the very dirty stone staircase, which looked as if it had been muddied and dirtied by the boys' boots for ten years—and let the master pass by. I could draw his picture now.

He was a tall man, in a rusty black doctor's gown. He stooped in the shoulders, and his face must have been decidedly ugly, for I remember he had little eyes, and a large clumsy under-hanging lower jaw, which he had a habit of twitching nervously from side to side, until the effect was not unlike that of a cow chewing the cud. He was rather fat, and had an awkward, ungainly cow-ish

walk. Or else, which was not improbable, his queer name set me off at finding these resemblances, as it had the other boys. Altogether, the effect was irresistibly droll.

When he had passed, Hector—no, I think it was Norman, for Norman had an immensity of quiet fun in him—slyly pulled me aside to shew me a cane that the doctor had stuck in his right hand coat pocket underneath his gown, which it hitched up most comically.

“He always carries the cane so; we call it the Cowe’s tail. And doesn’t it give us some pretty hard switches sometimes! But for all that, he’s an excellent fellow, the old doctor. And we must not keep him waiting, or he’ll get cross.”

“Here’s your door opposite, so go in and good luck to you!” said Hector, as he followed his brother into the class-room; and I was left outside, my good humour quite restored by laughing at the Cowe’s tail. I wondered if my uncle kept one too!

But soon these speculations ceased in the trepidation of making my first entry into a boy’s school—a crisis formidable to any lad—and most especially formidable in such a public place as the High School of Glasgow.

I just poked my head in, following two or three boys who then entered, and who stared at me as if I

had been a strange cat, which indeed I much resembled prowling about in this forlorn way. The class was evidently not begun, so I popped out again, and again prowled about the staircase. I might have done so till night-time, without gaining courage for a second appearance, had not Uncle MacIlroy suddenly come up the staircase, and seen me.

Now, if there was one thing in the world my uncle liked to see in young folk, it was punctuality. His rugged face dilated into a good-natured smile.

"Hallo, Phil! here already? Capital beginning this, and good beginnings make good endings. Come in.

"I—never went to school—and—I never had anybody to teach me but my mother," whimpered I.

"Poor lad!" and as my uncle looked at me I knew he was thinking of my father that was dead—he now and then did look at me thus, with a remorseful kindness quite incomprehensible to me. "Poor little fellow! Come in with me."

He took me by the hand, and led me into his class, setting me in a quiet place by myself. Then he gave his gown one shake, and his hair another—bent his brows, and set his lips sternly together—altogether putting on an appearance quite worthy of a pedagogue.

I think Uncle MacIlroy must have been the best

teacher of boys imaginable. He never thrashed—he rarely scolded, at least not in the passionate manner that many schoolmasters do; but there was something in his rigid inflexible will that did the work both of tongue and cane. It seems to me now perfectly marvellous, the way in which he reduced such conflicting elements to discipline and order. He could doubtless 'have ruled a kingdom as he ruled that little sovereignty, his class. He governed it thus well, because, like all good rulers, he governed that very difficult subject—himself. His temper, truth, conscientiousness, never failed.

Since even in my boyish imagination one of the chief qualities of a hero was to know how to rule, I seeing, as a quick child would at once see, how well he ruled his scholars, began to consider whether my uncle himself was not something of my grand object of search—a Hero. So by noon I had determined to put off my running away to England for an indefinite time, in order to wait and judge. Especially as having very easy tasks this day, merely to stand up and construe a few lines of Latin in my turn, I got through the class-hours more comfortably than I had expected.

At mid-day I was set free, and reached home somehow, having spent an hour or two rather amusingly than otherwise, in losing my way and finding it

again. Then I drew little Gracie about in her chaise, and played baby-play with Willie and Wattie till they quarrelled with one another, and afterwards both took to quarrelling with me.

By evening I was so thoroughly tired of doing nothing, that when the two elder boys set to their books, and Jamie, the cleverest and busiest little bee imaginable, set to his, I felt not so much ill-used as I had expected by being called into the study, and taught there for an hour or two. Of course I still considered myself rather a victim, and if I did go willingly and pay some slight attention to the teaching, it was with the firm conviction that the obliged party was, not myself, but Uncle MacIlroy.

("I don't exactly think so now," said Captain Philip, closing his tale for the night.)

CHAPTER VII.

THUS the first day of my experience at the High School passed off pleasantly enough. But things could not go on so smoothly for ever. It was out of the bounds of possibility, and out of the nature of boys.

My first trouble came upon me on the third day. Tired of going home to spend a lazy afternoon, I had sauntered about the quadrangle that formed the playground, in the hope of getting some sort of a game with somebody.

I got a much more unpleasant game than I thought—a sort of practical “*Hunt the Hare*”—in which I myself performed the part of the unlucky animal.

It happened thus. I had on, as was the custom of boys then to wear, at least in the south, a beaver hat like a man's. I well remember the extreme pride with which my mother bought it, taking me into a hat-shop and choosing it with great care; sighing the while, for she said it made her feel what

a man I was growing, and that wearing it I looked more than ever like my poor father. She little thought that the unlucky hat would prove so fatal a *casus belli*, and come to such an ill end.

My cousins had jestingly warned me that the wearing of it was dangerous, since the High School boys had a mortal objection to anything but Glengarrys. But it was quite impossible that I could constrain my Saxon liberty to wearing a Scotch bonnet, so my beaver stood its ground. Once or twice I noticed it eyed with a cruel smile, as it hung on its peg of dignity, the only hat in the class; but that was all.

However, on this Wednesday, when for the first time I joined my comrades in the playground, the hat's misfortunes began.

First, there was thrown from behind a wall a handful of mud, which lodged on the brim. Next, somebody shot a sharp pebble, which made a dent in the crown. Thirdly, some person or persons unknown, quietly stole behind and knocked it over my eyes.

At this, I grew into a furious passion, in the midst of which a little lad snatched my hat away altogether, "to keep my head cool," as he waggishly hinted. The next minute I saw it stuck on the handle of a whip, and in this manner passed from hand to hand through a crowd of jeering boys. The fifth indignity was to

batter in the crown, the sixth to turn it inside out, the seventh and last was to stick it up on the top of a wall and shoot it with pins from a cross-bow.

By this time my rage was unutterable, but its impression was harmless enough, as a great gaunt lad held my arms pinioned behind me.

"Hollo, what are you doing to the wee fellow?" cried Hector's loud voice, and frantically I writhed myself out of the big lad's arms into those of my cousin.

"I will have my hat. They've stolen and spoilt it. I'll be revenged. I'll bring you all up before the mayor."

"We hae nae mares here, but ye may ask at the Cowe," answered a lad, which atrocious joke was received with shouts of applause, in the which my little burst of indignation was completely drowned. Even Hector began to laugh as loud as any of them, and in so doing imperceptibly slid from my side. When a joke goes against a fellow, it's rather bad for his cause.

I sought refuge with Norman. "Help me, do help me. Get me my hat again,—my poor hat, that cost my mother so much money."

It was an unhappy allusion. Everybody maliciously wanted to know the precise amount of cash my mother paid, and how much she had left? and all that

sort of thing. Some even attacked my two cousins on the subject, and made a few contemptuous allusions to "Auntie."

Then Hector's spirit rose up for the honour of the family. "I'll tell you what, lads, if you don't let Philip Carew alone and give him his hat again, I'll fight the four biggest of you, turn and turn about."

This, I do believe, was exactly what he wished, for Hector was the stock pugilist of the school, and fought battles for anybody or anything, quite in amateur fashion. Nevertheless, I thought it very kind of him to champion me, and loved and admired him very much.

Norman, after a dissuasive word or two, ceased to interfere. He was either too quiet or too wise to go right against the storm. He only stayed close by to see that his brother had fair play.

It was agreed that the combats should be wrestling matches, not battles with fists, lest black eyes or bruised noses should betray anything to parents; and so like a young Antæus, or else like his great Trojan namesake, did Hector begin the fray.

He was a capital wrestler, strong, active, bold; I never saw his like. Now I became quite certain that I had found my "hero!" He laid the first combatant prostrate in the mud, was himself laid prostrate by the



THE WINTER.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

second, but rose up fresher than ever, and returned the compliment. The third lad skulked crying from the field, and with the fourth Hector was so well matched that the battle at length ceased, neither being victor, but both giving up from the very unwarlike fact that it was getting near dinner-time.

For this all-important reason, when Hector had received a round or two of applause, the play-ground became gradually thinned, the circle which had gathered round the fighters slowly broke up, and the grand bone of contention, having been kicked about pretty well, at last lay unnoticed in a corner. In this, as in many a more important war, the original matter of dispute soon came to be altogether forgotten. Even I myself, in my enthusiasm for the fighting, had ceased to remember my unlucky hat, and stood composedly in the drizzling rain, bare-headed, until I began to sneeze.

"What's to be done with the boy? he is not so hardy as we," said Norman kindly.

"Oh, let him take my bonnet to run home in," answered my "hero," throwing it towards me with an indifferent yet patronising air. "Well, Phil, are you not very much obliged to me for fighting your battles "

I said "yes," though I thought he need not have asked the question. And somehow I let the bonnet

lie, and tried to pick up and set to rights my poor battered hat.

It was no use, the thing was a perfect scarecrow.

"Nay, let it be, and put on Hector's, since he offers it. You can't go through the streets bare-headed, the folk would laugh at you."

Hector turned suddenly round. "By the bye, I never thought of that. Hey there! I cannot spare my bonnet, old fellow." He picked it up again and set it firmly—not on my head, but his own.

"Nay," said Norman, as I began to sneeze worse than ever, for the rain had thoroughly soaked my hair, "Phil needs it worse than you; and you being a bigger boy, would get through the streets better, even if you were tormented a little. They wouldn't dare to do it long. Think again, Hector."

But Hector, the bold fighter, could not face the humiliation of walking home without his hat. He grew angry, and told his brother "to practise what he preached." I protested against having either's cap, for I did not like to see Hector cross with me, after having defended my cause so bravely.

"Here, take this, and we'll see what is to be done," cried Norman, throwing me his bonnet and running away.

"He's only showing off, he'll be back directly," muttered Hector.

But he did not come back. We waited a little while, and then, hunger being strong upon us, we started home, both rather silent. Just turning the corner of the street where Uncle MacIlroy lived, we met Norman.

He was walking along, the heavy rain pouring on his head, and running down his neck in little streams. His cheeks were very hot, and his manner hurried, for there was a tribe of ragged urchins at his heels, jeering and pointing after him, calling him "bareheid," "gowk," and "daft laddie." And poor Norman was naturally such a shy, timid boy, painfully sensitive to observation. What he must have suffered in that hour's walk!

Hector and I ran to him, I full of tenderness and contrition, Hector muttering something about "thrashing all the little vagabonds within an inch of their lives." But that proceeding was stopped by an unlucky, or lucky conjuncture.

Close behind us, wearing his most serious look, appeared Uncle MacIlroy.

"What's all this. Tell the truth."

We obeyed, Hector being the foremost to tell it, and to his own disadvantage likewise; for when his feelings were touched he was a generous fellow.

Uncle MacIlroy heard in silence. He did not even take exception to the matter of the fighting, which

Hector had modestly dwelt upon very lightly. All he said was said to Norman, in a tone so gentle that we were quite startled.

"My boy, I am glad to see that you have the best courage of all, *moral courage*."

Stooping a little, he put his arm through that of his eldest son, who stood by blushing and agitated as a girl,—and so walked with him up to their own door.

I don't think I ever saw Norman look so happy or so proud.

CHAPTER VIII.

("Boys," said Captain Philip Carew, in answer to general request, "do you expect me to tell you circumstantially what happened day by day during the time I was at Glasgow? Because, if you do, I can only say it is an impossibility. Remember, all this happened twenty odd years ago, and if I had not the clearest memory imaginable, you would not have the story so respectable as it is. Even now, I have a strong conviction that I am painting things not exactly as I saw them then—for boys have little observation—but as I afterwards by comparison found out they were, or must have been. Are you content to receive matters so, or shall I stop?")

"No—no—no—" was the outcry, though there came a very faint deprecatory "yes" from some person or persons unknown.

"The Noes have it, as they say in the House of Commons," cried Uncle Philip. "So here begins.")

Our days at Uncle MacIlroy's well-ordered house

passed so exactly alike, that the history of one will do for all.

We rose at seven—then lessons, prayers, breakfast, classes, dinner, play (not much, alas!), tea, lessons, bed. After bedtime came the hour of chatter and forbidden fun, tempered with serious discourse between the brothers, with whom it was a very anxious time.

Now, though of course I had never been in the "fourth year," from constant hearing about it, I knew by heart every member of "our class," his capabilities, and his chance of prizes.

First there came Andrew Caird, the undoubted Dux—nobody ever dreamed of contesting that point. Next to him were Norman and Hector MacIlroy, who usually "ran neck and neck," as sportsmen say; the elder's diligence still keeping a trifle a-head, in spite of the younger's brighter parts. But, latterly, the lazy Hector had absolutely suffered his next class-mate, John Gordon, to get his place sometimes, whence came sore heart-burnings and fears.

These four were all ministers' sons. I think I said before that Uncle MacIlroy had been brought up to the ministry, though for some years he had had no church. The four "ministers' boys" were the pride of the whole "year." They always kept together at the head of their class, and held slightly

aloof from the lower lads, whose names I don't remember, as they went by the general term of "the other fellows." Nobody ever thought of them in connexion with prizes. All the excitement, all the doubt, contest, and dread, lay with the ministers' boys.

Now I, who had never known anything of life at a public school, still less at a public school in Scotland, was at first driven "clean wud," as my northern cousins would observe, by the constant talk about "our examinations," "our prize-givings," &c. &c.

"Can't you make a little less fuss about it, and let a poor fellow go to sleep," cried I one night from my shake-down on the floor. "What does it matter who gets the prize?"

"What does it matter?" echoed Hector indignantly. "When all Glasgow comes to look at us, or may come if they like—when we have to walk up in face of everybody, and the Lord Provost himself gives us the prize!"

I own, the latter fact struck my youthful imagination. I remembered having once seen the Lord Mayor, and being greatly awed thereby. The idea of receiving a book from the hands of a live Lord Provost, only a degree lower than a Lord Mayor, seemed something very grand indeed.

So I only said "O!"—a great round O of enormous

reverence, and sat up in bed leaning on my elbows, and listening with open mouth to what Hector and Norman were saying.

The former was in what Norman called "a way," "a state of mind," which may be translated to mean a state of temper.

"I know it's no use," he was saying; "I know I'll not get it. There's that confounded fool—"

Here Norman gave a low whistle—he didn't quite like bad words.

"I say it again, that confounded fool, Johnnie Gordon, whom I thought I could beat by just lifting my little finger, has kept my place as often as I have kept it myself, or oftener. He is sure to get the prize. And if he does, I'll thrash him within an inch of his life."

Norman whistled again. I began to think that, hero as my younger cousin was, he had rather queer notions of might and right. Nevertheless, I earnestly wished he might get the prize, or if not, that Johnnie Gordon might get the thrashing. I felt convinced that both were equally deserved,—as indeed, I still think they were.

"Now, Hector," Norman answered, "if you'd only listen to reason, and take things coolly. You did so a week ago. You said you did not care a straw about getting any prize at all."

"He did say that, for I heard him," added I, at rather an unpropitious moment. Hector made an angry lunge out of bed. (He was rather fond of pommelling even me sometimes, but it was quite in a friendly way, and I always took it quietly—I was so fond of him.) The lunge missed me, so all I got was a polite "Hold your tongue! Bother!"

"Don't practise beforehand on poor Phil, in mistake for Johnnie Gordon," said Norman laughing—he knew good humour was ten times better than scolding; "If you want to keep your hand in, I'm bigger. Hollo!—let's have a round!"

He leaped up in bed, tucked up his white shirt sleeves, and his bare arms—also very white, for I remember we used to tease him mercilessly about their lady-like colour—shone in the moonlight. Altogether he made such a comical show of warfare—poor Norman, who never could fight—that Hector forgot all his ill-humour, and burst out laughing, until Uncle MacIlroy coming up stairs, rapped warningly at the door.

So we all slunk into bed again, and were doomed to whispers—under cover of which, I managed to learn the real facts about the prizes, and about Hector's wrath.

In the High School of Glasgow at that time, and even now for all I know, prizes were given in this

fashion:—the boys took places in their class; each day it was set down in writing where they stood, first, second, third, and so on. At the year's end these numbers were counted, and the lowest number, which consequently ranked highest in the class, received the prize. In my cousins' class there were three prizes, the first of which would doubtless fall to Andrew Caird or Norman—the second was pending between Hector and Johnnie Gordon. All the winter and spring these two had run nearly equal—in their Latin at least, which was the thing chief thought of—but after the holidays, Hector's soul had been left behind with the boats and the Clyde, and he lost his place continually. Doubtless the score would turn out very much against him, poor fellow!

"It's a great shame," cried I warmly, after which loud exclamation I took the useless precaution of smothering my mouth in blankets lest they should hear in the next room.

"It is a shame, when he could beat Gordon and me too if he tried. If Hector were not such a lazy fellow I should be shaking in my shoes," said the good-natured elder brother. "But after all it is not sure for a few more days. Hold up to the end, lad! Never say die!"

And he began counting the other chances Hector had, supposing the Latin prize failed. Alas! all



MAMA'S STORY




the other chances were likely enough to fail too. In Greek, figures, mathematics, drawing, there was always some unlucky impediment. Perhaps the real impediment was what Uncle MacIlroy, teaching his boys at night, often said, and what I then considered an atrocious libel and a cruel instance of paternal injustice—that Hector was one of the laziest fellows the sun ever shone upon!

“What’s to be done!” cried the poor lad, waking up to his disastrous situation. “Oh, what will father say if I get no prize at all!”

Here was an awful prospect!—the more so as “Father” had of late been so busy teaching me in the evening, that he had not looked after his own boys quite so carefully as he ordinarily did. Nevertheless, from little things which he said sometimes, we knew how much he counted on the success of the cleverest of his sons, in whom, though he tried to hide it, he evidently took great pride.

I too, began to speculate on what Uncle MacIlroy would say, did Hector win no prize this year; and as the brothers began to talk in a lower voice, and very earnestly, I was left to my own meditations. These I suppose, gradually melted into drowsiness, and drowsiness into dreams; for I remember fancying that the prizes were to be given away that night, in our bed-room—that the Lord Provost, sitting in state



on the chest of drawers, was delivering numberless rewards to everyone but Hector, whom he sentenced to be beheaded. That thereupon my uncle came in, dressed like the executioner of Charles I., carrying instead of a hatchet, the dogs-eared Virgil, with which he solemnly cut off Hector's head, the decapitated body falling across the bottom of my bed.


At which I screamed myself awake, and found it was only Gracie's immense black cat, who had leaped on my feet, and was purring himself to repose as contentedly as possible.

Hector, however, was still alive, if I might judge by his vociferous snoring ; in the which I doubtless very soon joined. But before then, I recollect seeing Norman lie, his wide-open eyes and anxious face distinctly visible in the moonlight. He might have been thinking of his prize ; I fancied so then, but now I don't believe he was. Poor Norman ! I did not always do him justice, in those days.

CHAPTER IX.

WEEKS and days, nephews, seemed a great deal longer to Philip Carew then, than to Uncle Philip now. The time at last arrived when the public examination was only a fortnight distant, and the boys were daily expecting to be informed how the prizes stood. The examination, I should say, was merely complimentary, to shew off the boys' acquirements, and had no reference to reward of merit.

Of an evening we were always a very studious set, but during the last few days of suspense we worked like Trojans! I could picture us now, all gathered round the table with our books and exercises before us, Hector conning his, fast, loudly, impatiently—his cheeks flushed with excitement; Norman sitting very quiet, trying to knock every word of the lesson into his honest head, poking his fingers in and out among his stiff hair,—then decidedly and obnoxiously red, but which, as Gracie lovingly foretold, would



grow into the prettiest colour imaginable. And Gracie was right.

James too, the busiest little laddie of ten years old, what an indefatigable student he was! With all his terror of four-footed beasts, how bravely he could decline *bos, bovis!* and what wonderful long sums he got through, perfect mountains of multiplication! Only, he never could learn anything without digging his elbows on the table, and squeezing his fists into his chin, and knitting his pretty brows like an old philosopher. Poor little Jamie! I wonder if he does the same to this day in his learned college at Calcutta!

My aunt always presided at the lesson-learning, the head of the household being then safely deposited in his study, to *somebody's* great relief, I confess! Now and then, however, we knew by my aunt's looking up and smiling, that he had re-appeared at the parlour door, to carry off some unfortunate wight for a lesson; and again silence fell on everybody, except for the click of Mrs. MacIlroy's scissors as she mended those eternal pairs of stockings, little and big—grey and white—socks and long hose. Poor woman! I dare say she almost wished, after the formula of the Emperor Nero, that her numerous household had but one foot; the only hope for a termination of her labours.


Nobody was allowed to talk during the hour of lessons. This was a positive law, which like many another, was by some loophole or other slipped through. Gracie did it chiefly. Nobody could see her lying on her little sofa in the corner, telling fairy-tales to Willie and Wattie, without listening with one ear at least. Most interesting tales these were, always beginning "once upon a time," and ending with "they lived very happy all their lives." What wonderful people "*they*" must have been!

But Willie and Wattie was not always satisfied even with them. Continually the wee fellows, Willie especially, would come creeping to the table, pulling Norman's sleeve with the interminable "Please, tell me a 'tory!"

And continually Norman would lay his book down, rub his fingers over his forehead, to send the cobwebs away, and patiently launch into some astonishing adventure, told in an under-tone, with the gravest face imaginable. He certainly was the very perfection of an elder brother, as regarded the babies of the family.

In fact, whether a Hero or not, in all cases of difficulty he invariably turned out the best elder brother in the world.

I remember one Saturday night—it must have been Saturday, our weekly holiday—his taking me



aside and warning me to be especially "jolly," and say no word about the all-engrossing subject—the prizes—if I could help it. From this I guessed that Norman had good reason for thinking that to-day was the critical day with the masters, and that Monday would decide everything.

I felt very uncomfortable ; for little as I went among the High School lads, I had heard enough to know what the Fourth Year generally thought of Hector's chance ; and that it was but the turning of a feather between my elder cousin and the steady-going, patient, wooden-headed dolt, Johnnie Gordon. Very hard, that !

However, I made myself "jolly," as Norman desired, and helped him to make the rest so. Hector did not heed us ; he was, or seemed to be, in very high spirits ; he had been third in the class for five days now, and thought that Johnnie Gordon's star was paling. He was so easily swayed either to hope or fear, poor fellow !

After tea, Norman put on his comical mood—which, when he chose, was very comical indeed. He took little Willie on his knee, and told him the queerest *'tories*, until we all gathered round in curiosity. As for the child, his pretty face lengthened with amazement, and his eyes were almost starting out of his head.

"Not quite so wild as that, my boy, you'll frighten the little ones," said the mother, with a gentle—a *very* gentle reproach, for she had been watching Norman all night, and doubtless guessed his motive, though she said nothing. "Come, Willie and Wattie, before you go to bed, shall mama tell you a 'tory?"

Mama's '*stories*' were so rare, that at once there was a delighted assent, and all crowded round. I could see that little fireside group now; my aunt in her arm-chair, with Wattie on her knee, Gracie lying on the sofa opposite, so smiling and content, with Norman sitting at her feet, and Willie too, who never would leave his elder brother on any account. In the intermediate space sprawled Hector, James, and I, dividing the hearthrug with the big black cat, which Norman's waggery had christened Tea-kettle, on account of his colour, his fondness for sitting close by—nay all but on the fire, and his habit of hissing indignantly at every opportunity.

"Now," began my aunt, "if anybody knows what I am going to tell, they are not to say anything until it is over."

It was a mysterious commencement, and I paid attention. Every word almost of the story I remember to this day.

"Once upon a time—now, listen, Willie and Wattie, and, Jamie, do not be pulling poor Tea-

kettle's tail—Once upon a time, there were a papa and mama living together at a manse far up in the Highlands. Perhaps Philip does not know what a manse is?"

Ay, but I did; having grown familiar with Scottish words. I at once stated that it was the clergyman's house.

"The minister's," said Aunt MacIlroy, correcting me; "and this papa was a minister. He had an immense parish, all among the mountains; indeed, he had to ride sixty miles to get from one end to the other. In the summer time he was often absent for whole days together, preaching among the hills, and leaving his wife at the little manse. It was a very small place. They lived there with only one servant to help the mistress in the house, and look after the two little boys."

"Two 'ittle boys," repeated Willie with grave interest. "Mama, were dey as big as Wattie and me?"

"I think so."

"Den, dey were not 'ittle boys," sturdily persisted Willie, whose reasoning and intellectual powers far surpassed his powers of language.

"Very well, they were big boys, then," said Norman laughing; "only do not interrupt mama."

Aunt MacIlroy tried to go on, but very soon

Willie, after a meditative silence, broke in again.

"Please, tell me one ting, just one ting."

"Well, out with it!"

"Did de two 'ittle boys wear pinafores?"

Everybody laughed, as indeed we often did at Willie; he required such very circumstantial descriptions of everything.

"Yes, I can answer for it; they did wear pinafores, which they tore just as often as Willie and Wattie do theirs, and often made mama very sorry." Here Willie, quenched and humiliated, poked his fingers thoughtfully in his rosy mouth, and let the tale go on.

"These two brothers were near of an age, and as there were no more, except a tiny baby, they were left to play together a good deal, with no one looking after them except the servant-lassie who was their nurse."

"Dat was Issy, their Issy," observed Willie, with the air of a person asserting a great fact; arguing, I suppose, that all nurses must bear the same name as his own.

"We'll call her Issy," answered the mama, smiling. "They were very good little boys, especially the elder, and did not give Issy or mama anything like such trouble as some other little boys I know. So they were allowed to run about the

manse-garden and farm-yard; for the minister had a sort of farm, that is, he kept a horse and two cows, and had a few sheep feeding on the hill-side.

"There were two places about the yard where the children were forbidden to go; one was to the byre while the cows were in it, and the other was to a stone trough that lay just outside the gate in the manse; the minister had placed it there for the cattle to drink out of. It was a long and deep trough."

"How long, and how deep?" enquired the pert-nacious Willie, whose great blue eyes were dilating wider and wider.

"About the length of the hearthrug, and as high as that," said my aunt, measuring with her hand about two feet from the ground. "In summer time, when the little mountain streams were dried up, it was always carefully kept full, by the minister's desire, that the poor thirsty cattle and sheep which happened to pass by, might always find something to drink at his door."

"How kind! Was he not a very good man, these boys' father?" asked James.

I could see my aunt's eyes silently shining; but she only nodded her head in reply.

"One summer-day the little boys were sent out into the garden, to play about there, while Issy was busy washing and drying the clothes, going to look

at the children from time to time, to see that they got into no mischief. For though, as I said before, they were good boys, still they were very young. Country children brought up as they were, have on the whole more sense than town children, otherwise these would not have been trusted alone at all. But though the younger was daring and heedless, the elder was a very wise little fellow for his age.

“On this especial day they were more left to themselves than they had ever been before, for the minister was out on the hills, and the mother was kept indoors, looking after her poor little baby that was ill.

“She sat nursing it for a long time, an hour or two after she had sent away the boys. It kept crying incessantly, so that she could hear nothing, think of nothing but that. At last it grew quieter, and she walked about the room singing it to sleep. The window was open, for the day was very warm; everything around was quite still, as the Highland mountains always are in summer. But as she stood laying her baby in bed, she heard a faint sound somewhere outside the house.

At first she thought it was only the hens calling their chickens far down the road; it was very unlikely to be the voices of people talking, for the manse was in such a solitary place that sometimes

not more than one person passed in a day. And just then the poor baby waking, the mother turned and sang it to sleep again. When she ceased she still heard the same faint noise."

"What sort of a noise?" James wished to know.

"Like somebody who was trying to call out and could not, being half smothered, and the cry sounded like a little child's."

Here Aunt MacIlroy stopped, looked pale, as if the bare idea of this critical moment were too much for her motherly heart.

"The—the minister's wife ran to the window. It looked on the long garden, at the bottom of which ran the road. There she saw the great deep trough, which had been that morning filled, and above it something which looked like a little curly head.

"Nobody can tell how the terrified mother managed to get down stairs. When she came to the trough-side, there were her own poor boys—not one, but both! The younger had fallen in with his face foremost, nearly touching the water; the elder, not strong enough to pull his brother out, had climbed up and stretched over the side. Baby as he was, he had the sense to keep his little brother's head above water, holding it by its curls, while he cried out for "mama" and "Issy." He must have remained thus for more than half-an-hour. Both were nearly

exhausted; another minute—and the little hands would have given way, and the little head have sunk down, and—O my dear children!”

We all looked in amazement at my aunt, who had leaned back in her chair, much agitated. The children clustered round her anxiously, but she soon put them aside with her quiet smile, and was herself again.

“But the little boys,” said Hector, deeply interested. “They were saved? They grew up to be men? What a wonderfully brave fellow the elder must have been!”

“And so sensible too,” added James.

“Surely,” Hector continued energetically, “the younger would never forget what he owed to his brother, even when they were quite babies.”

“I hope,” the mother answered, “I earnestly hope he never may.” And smiling she looked from one to the other of her two elder boys.

Norman sat uneasily twisting Willie’s pinafore. All the while he had not spoken a word; but when he met his mother’s eye he blushed crimson.

Gracie half rose; she was the quickest of us all to divine the mystery. “Mama, it’s a true story you have been telling us? And I guess who were the two little boys.”

Sobbing, she flung her arms round Norman’s neck and kissed him.

Then a light broke upon us all, but Hector was the most confounded. He turned red and pale, and looked more near crying than I had ever seen him.

"Mama—and I never knew this!"

"Your father desired it should not be told. But it is indeed true. Your brother Norman saved your life."

"Norman saved my life," repeated Hector, still bewildered. But Norman came up and put his hands on his brother's shoulders with a cheerful laugh, "Wake up, old fellow, you see we're both alive now."

Then Hector, quite overcome, did a little bit of sentiment, and the two big brothers kissed one another as if they had been baby playfellows.

My aunt was a wise woman. After her story nobody even so much as thought of prizes.

I went to bed that night looking with rather different eyes at my cousin Norman. Though I still believed it quite impossible that such a mild easy-going fellow could be in any way the hero I sought, yet I began to think that during his boyish life-time Norman MacIlroy had done one or two things that even a hero need not be ashamed of.

What say you, nephews?

CHAPTER X.

ON that Monday—the very day of all others that I intended to stay about the school after my uncle's class was over,—which I did not usually do, the High School lads teased me so—on that Monday I had to come home at once, for poor little Gracie was ill, and my aunt wanted me to deliver some messages. Of course, I was always glad to do anything for my kind, good aunt, and little Gracie.

I came direct from school, hearing no word of the prizes. Indeed, I forgot all about them till dinner time.

Then, as I sat at the window, trying to keep the little ones quiet, I saw my two elder cousins coming down the street. One look at Hector was enough to explain the truth—that he had failed, and Johnnie Gordon had won.

Poor Hector; the proud, handsome, merry lad !
How I hated that Johnnie Gordon !

I did not like to run and meet the boys, lest it

might wound Hector's feelings; so I listened till the hall door opened, and very soon Norman came in alone. His brother had gone away upstairs.

"Well?" said I in a whisper, for Gracie lay on the sofa asleep.

"Well!" said he; and nothing more. He looked almost as unhappy as Hector himself.

"How many has he got? Any or none?"

"One—second for writing. But that's nothing!"

"And you?"

"Oh, Phil, be quiet! Just three!" His vexed voice, though he spoke of three prizes, might have seemed like affectation or hypocrisy; but even in my most unjust moods I never could find the like of either in Norman MacIlroy.

We said no more, for Gracie was just waking, and ill as she was, we knew it would grieve her to know how unhappy her brothers were. Very soon I went upstairs to poor Hector.

Nephews, I have long been a grown man, and seen much of vexation and disappointment in the world, but I own that the recollection of Hector's misery rests upon me still. It was perfect despair.

"Hollo!" shouted he, when I opened the door. "Keep off, will you? Who wants you? If you come in I'll send this book at your head."

I did come in, for I was so sorry for him; and he

did send the book at my head, only luckily I ducked down and it missed me. By that time Hector's passion was cooled; he lay sullenly on one bed, while I sat on the other, looking at him.

"Hector," said I, "if I were you, I wouldn't care."

"I do not care!—who says I do?—I've thrashed four of the class, and kicked Johnnie Gordon half way down stairs, and now I'm satisfied. Doctor Cowe and his prize may go to the devil if he likes."

This certainly was language not quite becoming a minister's son, or indeed any body's son. I was quite astounded. For, though I know the boys in public schools generally get a habit of using ill language, and are even so deluded as to think it fine and manly, it was not so with my cousins. Uncle MacIlroy had brought up each of his sons to be, like himself, a Christian and a gentleman.

"Dear Hector," said I meekly, for all the girlishness I had about me from being taught by women, came back when I saw him in such trouble. "Please, don't talk about the devil. It isn't right, and it won't get you back your prizes. Never mind, try again!"

"I'll not try again. I'll never try any more. I'll drown myself—or go to sea—or—"

"Come and have dinner," said little Willie at the door.

This apropos conclusion of his sentence would

at any other time have made Hector laugh his ill-humour away, but it was too deeply seated now.

"I'll have no dinner. Yes,"—he added with a sudden thought—"I'll go down, just to show them how little I care."

It happened fortunately for Hector that his father being out, and his mother busy over Gracie, the dinner that day was a very desultory affair. Nobody took much notice of him.

He made a great show of eating heartily—being always a big, stout, hungry boy; but, looking at him, I could fancy he swallowed down more tears than mouthfuls. He seemed in a state of perpetual choke, poor lad! All the rest were very kind to him, and bore his sharp speeches without a reply; for, though the young MacIlroys often squabbled a little, as all families of boys must, there was always a tender combination over any one of the number that was either sick or in trouble. I have no doubt that if Hector that day had abused us all round we should have taken it quite patiently—so sorry were we for him.

But he did nothing of the kind. He ate his dinner, or pretended to do so, and went up again to his own room as before, save that this time he locked the door. Which proceeding made me very unhappy, for I thought him such a desperate, daring boy,

capable of anything. All the romantic stories I had ever read, of incarcerated or wronged heroes secretly putting an end to themselves, came horribly into my mind as I sat by that bolted door. Every now and then I called to Hector; he made no answer, though I heard him moving about. At last, as the afternoon darkened he seemed to grow quieter. My terror only increased the more. Every minute I expected to hear the click of a pistol, or the fall of a heavy hanged body!—A very brilliant imagination of mine, considering there were no sort of fire-arms in the house; and certainly Hector, whose hands were not adroit at anything but fighting, would never find out the correct way to hang himself. My knowledge of his want of manual dexterity also put to flight another fear—that he had torn the sheets into strips, made a rope-ladder, after the fashion of De Latude and other prisoners, escaped out of the window—a very useless trouble, when he could so easily have gone out by the front door—and so ran off to sea, never to be heard of more!

But it would be idle to count up my fantastic and romantic speculations during the two hours that I kept guard at intervals over Hector's bed-room. I had nobody to speak to, Norman having disappeared mysteriously after dinner. I thought it very unkind of him so to go and leave his brother in

such a state, and my love and pity for Hector rose tenfold.

After a while the poor lad seemed comforted, for I did not hear him dashing things about, but still I could get no answer, not even when it grew dark, and I begged him to come to the parlour-fire. At last, when a quarter of an hour's silence had rather frightened me, I bethought me of sending in a potent consoler.

I waylaid Teakettle on the stairs and made him scratch with his fore paws at the door, his accustomed token that he wished to be let into the boys' room.

The door was half opened. Hector was certainly growing mollified—towards Teakettle at least. But little hope there was for me, who only had the door shut in my face with a cross "Get along!"

I certainly won "more kicks than halfpence" from my Hero; but then I was rather a devoted little fellow, and had always that peculiarity, more suited to a woman than a man, of loving those I did love entirely for themselves, without reference to the way they treated me. Likewise it shows what a generous, frank-hearted lad Hector must have been, and how many good qualities he must have had, since he made me love him so well, though he was such a tyrant.

It was useless meddling with him any more till Norman came in—Norman who could coax anybody to anything. I bethought myself of the rhyme my mother used to say to me in my sulky moods, a rhyme into which she put a mighty deal of moral meaning.

“Little Philippe
Has lost his sheep (viz. his *temper*)
And doesn't know where to find him;
Leave him alone
And he'll come home,
Dragging his tail behind him.

I never exactly comprehended the force of the last line, nor do I now, but doubtless it had a significance, so I determined to follow out the axiom and leave Hector alone.

Only once, unable to keep away, I crept up the dark staircase and listened at the door. There was a hollow, smothered sound inside—regular—coming at intervals like groaning. Had he really killed himself? I was on the point of running to alarm the household, when I remembered Teakettle—the wise sensible cat, that was so fond of Hector. And I fancied that in the midst of the groaning I heard loud purrs. O lucky Teakettle! There could not be anything very wrong.

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Nevertheless, it was an infinite relief when, tumbling down stairs, I felt somebody else tumble up against me, and found it was Norman.

"Hollo—who's that?"

"Only me.—Oh Norman, come up here and listen!—What's wrong with Hector?"

Norman leaped up three stairs at a time, tried the handle, and then put his ear to the door.

What a relief it was to hear him burst out in one of his merry laughs! "Bravo! you're a pretty goose, Phil. He's only snoring. Here—Hector lad! wake up. Open the door. I've got some news for you."

That loud cheery voice would have wakened the sulkiest sleeper. We heard Hector roll out of bed and unlock the door.

"Well, I hope you have had sleep enough; here have I been all the way to Doctor Cowe's and back."

Hector threw himself down again and told Norman to hold his tongue.

"I will not, for I have a notion in my head. I've been to the old Doctor about the Greek verb."

This was decided Greek to me, and I durst not give any sign of my presence by enquiry; but I afterwards found out what Norman meant. There were, besides the prizes, a few medals given at the

High School, and one of these was for the best writing out of a Greek verb. This was considered one of the chief competitions in the class, and Norman, who was pretty well on in Greek, had done his, but Hector had been too lazy to try.

"Let me alone," muttered he, "what do Greek verbs matter to me?"

"A little, for I've a plan, as I said. Hold up, lad, and listen. Do you think I'd have walked all the way to Partick and back for nothing? No, though the old Cowe did give me a drink of milk and a big apple. Here it is!"

But Hector, with a return of his old ill-humour, sent the offered apple spinning across the room.

"Well—if you will not listen," said his brother, somewhat hurt.

"I will listen to *you*, only do not teaze me about old Cowe and the 'prizes.' I hate and despise them all."

"Would you despise a medal if you got it?" said Norman, smiling. You might; there's plenty of time. The Greek verb cannot be decided till just before the prize-giving, as the Principal wishes to judge it himself, and he is away from home. Though my verb is done, Charles Henderson's is not, nor John Menteith's. The old Cowe himself says that if you were to try hard and work steadily, you might get the medal."

"Does he?" cried Hector, leaping up in bed, and nearly extinguishing poor Teakettle, who began hissing at a great rate.

"Ay, and I think he would be glad too. He knows what you *can* do;—and he would be greatly hurt that father's cleverest boy should gain nothing."

"But I will—I'll get that medal or I'll die for it," shouted the impressible Hector. "I'll brush up all my Greek, I'll work early and late."

"And I'll help you—that is in the writing, because perhaps you do not write Greek quite as well as I do, and the verb must look very neat, mind. But you'll soon manage it. We'll get up at six instead of seven, and practice that abominable *alpha*, *beta*, till you'll write Greek as well as you write your copy books. I think you have a very good chance of the medal. What says Philip?"

I could hardly speak, I was so glad!

"Hey, little Phil, are you there?" said Hector, patting me on the back. "Come, hunt for my other shoe, will you, there's a good lad; I'm going to get up to tea."

He did get up, and was soon his old merry self—kinder than usual to us all, especially to Norman. Gracie grew better towards night, which added to the cheerfulness, so that after all our woes we had quite a merry evening, and Norman told such lots of quaint

fairly tales and hobgoblin stories, that little Willie's curls almost stood on end. But when the little ones were fairly gone to bed, out came pen and ink, and the two lads were writing Greek verbs until the very last minute before their father came home.

All that week and part of the next we had nothing but Greek verbs. Of course all they did was mere practising; for the verb itself had to be written at school, on magnificent white parchment. But every bit of it was copied out a dozen times beforehand, by the indefatigable Hector, under his brother's instruction. Our bedroom resembled the cave of Virgil's Sybil, being strewn with innumerable leaves of waste paper, scraps of tenses and moods; and I'm sure I went to sleep every night to the sound of

τυπτω

τυπτεῖς

τυπτει

τυπτ—

("Lack-a-day!" cried Uncle Philip, laughing—"if I haven't quite forgotten my dual number.")

CHAPTER XI.

HECTOR's verb was done in sufficient time ; and, as his brother positively informed me—and Norman never exaggerated anything—"it looked stunning."

We were all very glad, for the poor lad had worked harder and more steadily than Hector had ever been known to work before ; and counting on his deservings, we began hopefully to anticipate the medal. As for the other competitors, Charles Henderson and John Menteith, Norman declared there was nothing to be feared from them, their verbs were so much inferior to Hector's.

It was very odd, but,—probably from his saying so little about it,—we had all of us quite forgotten Norman's own verb—completed some time since, and put away.

The examination day arrived. Though nothing of importance depended on it, still it was a day of great expectation and delight to the High School boys.

"You are allowed to come to our Year, and

mama, and Gracie too," said Hector to me; "Doctor Cowe is glad to see everybody. He hopes they will come early, because the Ovid begins at ten, and he wishes father to question us. Anybody may put to us any questions they like."

"Even I, Hector?" cried Gracie mischievously, holding up her merry face; she was quite well again now—at least, well for her.

"Even you, little goosie! supposing you choose to do such a very foolish thing, and exhibit your ignorance."

"Thank you," she laughed, putting her arms round his neck as he carried her down stairs to her little chaise;—rough boy as he was, Hector never had a hard word for Gracie. Indeed none of us had, she was such a gentle little darling.

Hector and Norman started first, but the rest soon followed in a body; my uncle and aunt, James, little Willie, Gracie and I.

It was a very formidable thing, opening that door of the Fourth Year; almost as formidable as the entrance into Uncle MacIlroy's class-room. For little boys, and girls too, persist in the notion that everybody is looking at them, when in fact everybody usually happens to have something very much better to do. If each shy person, boy or young man, could once believe of how very small importance he is to

society in general, and how rarely anybody sees whether he is in the room or out of it,—what he wears, or does not wear—what he does, or does not do,—and that, provided he does not do anything very extraordinary,—such as standing on his head, for instance, the chances are that nobody is taking the least notice of him;—if only he could be made to understand this, we should have much less foolish bashfulness in the world.

(“There’s a lecture for you, boys,” observed Uncle Philip. His nephews gave him such a hearty round of laughter and applause, that nobody could for a moment accuse *them* of bashfulness.)

I have no doubt I blushed as deeply as if the whole three-score pair of boys’ eyes were concentrated on me alone, when probably everybody looked at my aunt and Gracie, and nobody at me. And I remember feeling quite nervous as to whether I ought or ought not to smile in answer to the applause, or “roughing,” as my cousins called it, which greeted our entrance, quite forgetting that this tremendous racket of boys’ feet on the boards was meant in compliment to the favourite among all the High School masters, my uncle MacIlroy.

“They always ‘rough’ father very much,” whispered Gracie to me. “And he looks so pleased!—Ah, mama sees our boys. Look, Philip, there they are.”

Among the long line of boys' faces, I could not at first find out the two familiar ones. At last I saw them. Norman looked gravely quiet,—Hector all gaiety and happiness. What a handsome, bright, clever face it was !

“There are the rest of the class ; I was sure we would know them,” said Gracie. “That must be Andrew Caird at the top. What a little fellow he is to be so clever. How pale and delicate he looks ! I wonder, will he live to be a man ?”

(Gracie had a curious habit of speculating as to whether children she knew would live to be men and women. But she had so many strange ways, and looks, and thoughts).

“And there's that hateful Johnnie Gordon,” added I. “Look, Hector is talking and laughing with him. How generous !”

Gracie assented, with affectionate eyes. Nevertheless, she gave me a sign to be quiet ;—for Doctor Cowe was just saying, in a pompous nasal tone, which nearly made me laugh,—

“The Reverend William MacIlroy will commence with prayer.”

But the inclination to laughter ceased the moment my uncle began. He uttered a few solemn, simple words of extempore prayer, Scottish fashion, suited for the occasion, and such as boys could understand.

He was evidently in earnest ; a father looking at his own and other fathers' sons, all growing up, either for good or evil. He made even thoughtless lads in earnest too, for the moment, and there was not a careless gesture or a smile, until he had ceased.

"Now for Latin class. What shall it be, sir?" asked Doctor Cowe, who was very reverential to my uncle, as the best classic present. There had gradually dropped in a good many Glasgow gentlemen—stout fathers of families, and stupid bailies—who looked very wise, but whom, as I told Gracie, I should just like to have seen stand up and construe a page of Ovid. We schoolboys could have beaten them hollow, I know.

My uncle turned over his Virgil. Doctor Cowe handed another, with a very solemn bow, to my aunt, and a third to Gracie and me. Very kind of the old Cowe—and Gracie had fine fun in making believe she understood Latin.

"We will take the *Æneid*, second Book,

'At regina gravi jamdudum saucia cura.'"

began Uncle MacIlroy, as mildly as if he had not the whole poem at his fingers' ends,—as we boys all knew he had, together with almost every other Latin and Greek author. But he bore his learning quite meekly—a great deal more so than Doctor Cowe.

"Very well, Sir. Now boys. Duncan Brown first," pompously cried the latter individual.

Duncan Brown rose up. I had heard a great deal of him. He was the cleverest lad in the whole year; Dux in everything. His power of work was prodigious. He was reported to have sat up whole nights at his books—the ragged old books that Doctor Cowe had lent him, when he came, three years ago, as a big ignorant boy, of whom nobody knew anything except that his name was Duncan Brown. Few knew anything more of him now, except that he had outstripped every lad beyond him, had become the Doctor's favourite pupil, the glory of the whole class, and was going next term from Glasgow High School to Glasgow College.

Gracie and I looked with some curiosity at Duncan Brown. I remember his face quite well, even at this distance of time. It was very handsome, something like the portraits of Byron as a lad of seventeen, save that the mouth was less full and more sweet. It was the sort of head we call aristocratic. I don't know why, since there is but one true aristocracy, that of genius and talent, and this boy had it, most surely, even though no one knew where he came from, and his name was plain Duncan Brown.

But I am getting tedious. ("No—no—" said the obliging nephews,.) Well—well, I am not going to

construe *Æneidos*, *Liber IV.*, with all Doctor Cowe's corrections, and all Uncle MacIlroy's clear explanations, and all the ludicrous hints of a certain pompous bailie, who thought himself very learned, and to whom Doctor Cowe listened in polite silence, though he, and all the boys, even I, saw quite plainly that the old fellow had mistaken the sense of the passage, and was as arrant a dunce at Latin as his own youngest son.

I shall pass lightly over all this,—how Duncan Brown construed magnificently, and answered everything that everybody else could not answer, coming off with wonderful éclât. Also how Norman went through his part very creditably, and how Hector, twice as quick as his brother, was in great glory, answering his own questions and a dozen others, some of which were wrong, but generally right. And how, altogether, though Uncle MacIlroy pretended not to notice his own boys, and to be absorbed in the general examination, it was easy to see how gratified he was, when at the end he stealthily looked at my aunt and smiled.

I could not then understand why amidst all his pleasure the tears stood in my good aunt's eyes. But it is a weakness natural to all mothers, I suppose.

After the Virgil class, there were other examinations, which I forget, only I remember my two

cousins got through them honourably, and were regarded with great pride and veneration by Gracie and me, as well as by Jamie, who was next year to be promoted to the High School.

I also remember that, in conclusion, the old Cowe (whose "Tail" for this day only had become invisible) stood and read with much importance a written speech, in which he mentioned the general behaviour of the boys—while at the end and often in the middle of every sentence, arose a great amount of "roughing," in response to anything or nothing, just because the boys' feet wanted a little exercise. But when at last occurred the name of Duncan Brown, and the worthy old Doctor, with a voice rather tremulous, spoke earnestly of the Dux's industry, attention, and perseverance, saying that he had never had a fault to find with him since he came to the school; and how, in leaving for college, the best wishes of every master—and he was sure he might say every class-mate—went with Duncan Brown,—there arose a perfect storm of "roughing," of the sincerity of which there could be no doubt.

The Dux rose, looking very pale—bowed hurriedly—and then sat down, leaning his elbow on the opposite form; the massive forehead, and wonderfully intelligent eyes just visible above his thread-bare coat sleeve.

“Good bye to Duncan Brown!” whispered Gracie, with tears in her eyes. “I hope he will be a great man yet!”

(“The other day,” said Uncle Philip, pausing in his narrative, “I saw advertised a scientific lecture by a Professor Duncan Brown, F.R.S., and D.C.L., of Glasgow. I think, though it is more than twenty years since I saw him, I should almost recognize the lecturer). .

CHAPTER XII.

“I am now coming,” said Uncle Philip, “to the last portion of my history about a Hero. You must give me time to think it over carefully, and I will try and remember it as closely as I can.”

Everybody congratulated him on having hitherto done wonders in the matter of memory. Captain Carew smiled.

“Perhaps I have, even to a degree that may seem unnatural. But the colouring of childish recollection is often marvellously vivid and minute ;—and those three months in the north exercised such an influence on my after life, that every trifle connected with the time stands out as clear as a picture.”

His beautiful brown eyes grew thoughtful; he took his youngest niece on his lap, played with her baby curls for a little, and then began).

The examination lasted several days, for there were a great many classes in the High School. We

boys, with most sedulous pertinacity, insisted on going to all, and we tried hard to persuade my aunt to do the same. However her interest did not extend beyond her own sons, so she staid at home until the last morning, when Norman coaxed her out to see the performances of the writing-class.

It was early in a clear autumn day ; and no one who has seen the City of the West under foul aspects can imagine how cheery and pleasant Glasgow looks on a fine day. Very merrily did we go down Buchanan Street, my uncle and aunt first, and we three lads following. Either Hector had got over his disappointment about the prizes, or else his facile and sanguine nature was content with looking forward to the medal—which he continually talked about,—and seemed to expect with certainty. But by Norman's advice, or by tacit consent, we lads kept this little mystery to ourselves and did not enlighten the family in general either as to what Hector had so energetically accomplished, or what he hoped to win.

On the High School staircase a little incident occurred. My uncle suddenly turned round and called his eldest son.

“Norman, I quite forgot to ask about your Greek verb, over which you were so anxious. Did you get it finished all right?”

"Yes," said Norman briefly, glancing towards his brother, who luckily was not within sight or hearing.

"Do you think you have a good chance of the medal?"

"I—I don't know."

"Never mind, do not be shy about it," said the father kindly. "I am sure you have tried your very best, my boy.—I do hope he will get the medal," added Uncle MacIlroy, turning to his wife, "for I know how the lad's heart has been set upon it all this year."

I looked at Norman, and Norman at me. This was a view of the case which I at least had altogether overlooked. "What," said I, "If Hector"—

"Hold your tongue, stupid!" muttered Norman. I knew he must have been in what we called "a state of mind," or he would not have spoken so rudely. I could not tell what to make of him. But just then Hector came leaping up stairs, and we all went into the writing-room. All, I think, except my uncle, who had business elsewhere.

The writing class made a capital show. We passed table after table, all covered with fine specimens of caligraphy. There were copy-books numerous enough to have been the work of all the young scribes in Glasgow put together. Hector went merrily down the line, showing off all to his mother, making

jocular remarks on everything and everybody in the room, which was half full of masters, parents, and ladies. With these latter Hector MacIlroy was always quite a little beau, being so handsome, ready-witted, and gay.

Norman kept rather in the shade. He was generally very quiet mannered with strangers. More than once I saw him stand quite still and thoughtful, making believe to look at the copy-books; and then there came across me his father's words—"*His heart has been set upon it all this year.*" I couldn't understand my cousin Norman yet!

One of the masters, who was very polite to my aunt, now guided her to the farther end of the room; where, he said, was something that would afford her great pleasure.

There, hung against the wall in all their glory, were the important Greek verbs. Hector leaped forward with a flushing face—Norman hung back.

"It is not often our writing-class is so adorned," said the master, evidently looking with great pride on the fair white card-board sheets, on which the beautifully written Greek meandered in rivers of moods and tenses, a network of confusion, yet when one came to examine, proportioned in most perfect order. You can have no idea, nephews, what a pretty thing was that same Greek verb. "I was sure you

would admire it, madam," continued the teacher smiling, "yet these two are much inferior to the one just beyond. Will you look?"

My aunt did so, and hardly suppressed an exclamation of delight when she read, at the corner of the card-board, "Hector MacIlroy."

"My dear boy, how beautiful—how exquisite! When did you do it? Why did you never tell me?" But Hector was too pleased and proud to answer any of these questions. He could not take his eyes from his own handiwork, which was so much more successful than he had dared to hope.

"Indeed I must congratulate you, Mrs. MacIlroy," said the polite writing-master,—all masters are so wondrously polite on examination-days. "There could be no doubt of Hector's winning the medal, except for one possible rival, your other son."

He pointed to the last of the four verbs, which was Norman's. Hector started, and rushed to examine it. So did I. We were both struck with a cold fear, a fear so ungenerous, that meeting each others eyes we both blushed for the same.

"It is—very—beautiful," at last said Hector boldly, though I saw how his face had changed.

"Very beautiful indeed," repeated the mother, looking uneasily at each of her boys;—I never knew any parent so guarded in shewing preference.

"Both seem so good, I could hardly tell which was best."

"That is what all we masters say. The decision will be tough I think, and upon my word I am glad that judgment rests with the Principal, for I should be fairly puzzled. There can be no doubt that if Master Norman's were not there, Master Hector's verb would be successful—still—as it is—however, madam, I must congratulate you once more on both your sons."

My aunt bowed—the master bowed—and we passed on.—All but Hector, who still leaned on the table, looking from his brother's work to his own, and then back again. His rosy face had turned all colours—his mouth had sunk in; he was evidently in extreme agitation. I don't know how Norman felt, or looked or did. I only saw Hector.

At length the latter touched my shoulder. "Come out with me, Phil. I feel so stupid—so dizzy." He looked up and saw his brother lagging behind anxiously. "Get along, Norman! Do not be staring at me."

These were the first and last words of anger the poor lad said.

We were invited that day to lunch with some old ladies, who lived beyond Glasgow Green; and there being no reason to the contrary, we went. Norman

walked with his mother—Hector with me. We did not speak a word the whole way. This was such a new thing with Hector, always so loud and passionate in his troubles, that I began to feel quite frightened. He had evidently taken the matter very deeply to heart. I feared that in his silence he might be harbouring the bitterer wrath against his brother, but it was not so.

The old ladies gave us all sorts of good things, and wondered very much that we three hearty lads did not consume all before us. But for once in a way we were not inclined to eat. For myself, I felt as if the rosiest apple in the dish would have choked me like sawdust. But then I was a very soft-hearted and sentimental little fellow.

It was a great relief when we were turned out into the garden to gather apples for ourselves.

I don't know whether it was the apples that put it into my mind, but when I saw the two brothers left alone together, I had an uncomfortable recollection of Cain and Abel. I wondered very much what my cousin would do.

At first, they diverged, each taking an opposite path; Hector pulling the leaves of gooseberry bushes, and Norman walking quietly on, his hands in his pockets, until by some sudden turn the two paths met, and the brothers likewise. The elder put

his hands on the younger's shoulders, and looked him full in the face—so kindly—so sorrowfully!

“Hector!”

“Well, Norman!”

“You are not vexed?”

Hector paused, and at length said, sturdily, though it must have cost him much. “No, I’m not. It’s a fair fight—quite fair. If I lose, I lose.”

“That is not sure yet.”

Hector brightened up, but only for a minute. “No, no! However, if I must be beaten, it is better to be beaten by you; mind, I acknowledge that. Now, we’ll talk no more about it—it makes me sick.”

He did indeed look very wretched and ill, and soon his mother saw it would be advisable to take him home, and let his feelings grow calm of themselves. I thought I had better keep out of the way, so I walked back alone, Norman having already started. Nobody knew wherefore—but he was such a strange boy.

Passing by the High School, I thought I would just go in once more—to judge for myself, quietly and alone, which of the two Greek verbs had the best chance. It was getting almost dark, and many of the masters were leaving. In the writing-room were a few figures moving about with lights, putting by the copy-books, and taking down the ornamental writing

that was fastened to the walls. One of the junior masters was in the act of rolling up the Greek verbs.

"Stop a minute, please, Mr. Renton, let me take one more look."

"And me too," cried another lad, rushing up the room quite breathless. It was Norman.

Seeing me, he started back surprised, and, as I thought, a good deal confused, but soon recovered himself. We looked together at the two sheets—we and the master. There was no doubt which verb was done the best—even if Mr. Renton had not said so.

"Yes, you will surely get the medal, MacIlroy; still, I'm rather sorry for your brother Hector. Hey there!"—as somebody happened to call him,—“Lads, stay here a minute, only mind the candle and the ink-bottle—Norman, that is your own verb you're holding—take care!”

I looked at my cousin for a minute—he was extremely pale, and his eyes were fixed with an inexplicable expression on his work—done with such patience, hope and pains. He regarded it so lovingly, that, remembering Hector, I felt quite vexed and walked away.

A minute after, there was a great splash—crash—ink-bottle and card-board rolling together on the floor. The master came up in a passion, but it was

too late. The fair white sheet was covered with a deluge of ink. One of the verbs was irretrievably spoiled.

"It's my own—only my own," stammered Norman. "I did it myself, acci"—

He might have been going to say *accidentally*, but stopped, for it would have been the first lie the boy ever told. The moment I looked in his face, I felt convinced he had turned over the ink-bottle *on purpose*.

I will not now stop to discuss whether this act was right or wrong. I only know he did it.

Having done it, he stood shaking all over, as nervous and agitated as a lad could be; but Mr. Renton and the other masters were too busy and angry to notice this. They merely called him a "careless gouk"—and thought it a just punishment that he should have only ruined himself.

"Your brother Hector is sure of the medal now, and I'm glad, for he deserves it"—said one.

"Now, if you had had *his* verb in your hands, the case would have looked suspicious against you," said another. "But nobody would be such a fool as to go and destroy his own work, except by accident."

"A pretty figure you'll cut at the prize-giving," observed Mr. Renton. "And, what will your father say?"

The poor fellow winced. I ran up to him—"Oh, Norman, Norman!" He saw from my looks that I guessed all.

"Hush, Phil!" and he clutched my wrist as tight as a vice. "If you ever tell, I'll—"

What savage purpose he meant—declaring it with that broken, tremulous voice—I never knew. I only know that he somehow dragged me after him into the open air, and that there, quite overcome, we both sat down on the stone steps—and, I do believe, big lads as we were, we both cried.

Norman made me promise that I would never "let on," as he expressed it. I never did—until this day.

("Well," said Captain Carew, coming to an anchor, "does anybody want to know any more?")

Everybody did want to know a deal more—indeed sufficient questions were asked to keep Uncle Philip's tongue going till midnight.

"*Hout tout!*" as my uncle MacIlroy would say, this will never do. I can't engage to give a biography of all that has happened to all my cousins for the last twenty years. I only bargained to tell you the story of my discovering A Hero. Who was he?"

Some made divers guesses, others begged to hear a little more before they finally decided.)

I have little more to tell. I don't recollect much about the prize-giving ; I suppose my heart was too full. I only remember sitting in a crowded church (they usually give away the prizes in the Kirk, in Scotland), seeing boys' faces filling every pew, and amidst them all discerning clearly but one face—my cousin Norman's; hearing a long droning speech, interrupted with much "roughing," which sounded rather strange in a church; watching a long line of boys winding up one aisle and down another, past the precentor's desk, where they each bowed, got something, and vanished; listening for the name "Hector Mac-Iroy," and seeing him go up rather gravely, and come back looking so handsome and pleased, wearing the red ribbon and shining medal. As he did so, I mind above all, catching the eye of my cousin Norman, that grey eye—so soft—so good, though the mouth was a little quivering, until at last it settled into a quiet smile. Then I felt very proud to think that in the whole assembly, nay in the whole world, he and I alone knew—what we knew. And looking at him, as he sat there so quiet and unnoticed, I felt prouder still to think that I had learnt one thing more,—I had at last discovered—

"A Hero!" shouted all the nephews together.
"Norman was the Hero!"

(Uncle Philip nodded; but somehow his voice was

husky, and he leaned his forehead on his little niece's curls for a good while before he spoke. However, when he did speak, it was in his usual loud, cheerful voice.)

"Boys, you are quite right! Since that time the young MacIlroys have been scattered far and wide. At this moment, probably, Hector is sailing in his vessel round Cape Horn; James jabbering Hindostanee on the banks of the Ganges; Willie devoting his enquiring mind to the parallax of the fixed stars; and wee Wattie speculating whether or not he shall marry and settle like a Christian in Scotland, or go out like a heathen to the "diggings" in California.

"And one,"—added he, with a sudden pause and lowering of tone—"one of my dear cousins is with God."

"But," and shortly afterwards Uncle Philip spoke on bravely, as a good man should speak, who has learned life's hardest lesson, to bear and conquer sorrow. "But if among all these you should ask to point out the one most honoured, and most worthy of honour, I would send you to a certain town in Scotland, where, in a certain house, sits a certain honest man,—husband of a wife, and father of a family—"
—"No," shouted Uncle Philip, suddenly darting to the window, clearing the room at a bound, "he doesn't sit there at all. He is now standing at our gate. I

knew he would, for he promised. And, having promised, he was as sure to come as—as the New Year! Wait till he shakes the snow off his plaid, and then you'll see him, my boyish playfellow, the friend of my manhood, my cousin Norman MacIlroy! But, oh lads! for any sake, don't let him suspect I have just been showing him up in a character which he has sustained, and will sustain, all his life, without ever knowing it—that of

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